Focus On KEN FOLLETT!

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October 1986

MAGAZINE

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The Double Agent

STEVEN MITCHELL
Interrogation

WILLIAM ARDEN
Clay Pigeon

ANDREW OFFUTT
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ESTHER K. SCHULZ
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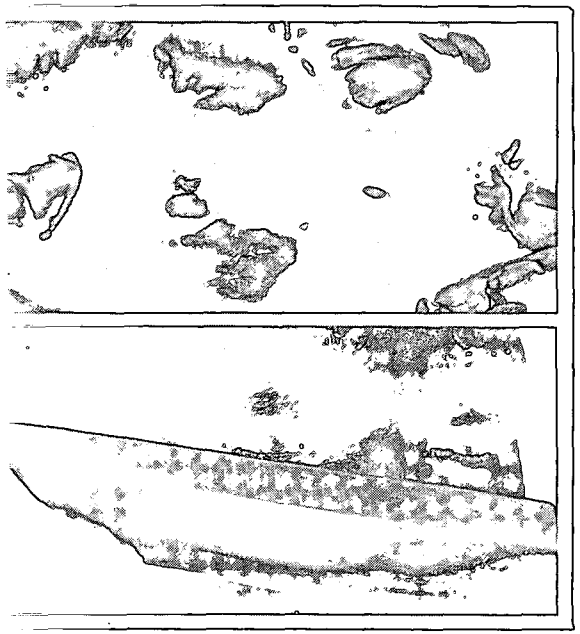
TAKE A NEW LOOK



AT THE PHENOMENA OF LIFE.
THE GOOD, BAD, BEAUTIFUL, AND UGLY.
THE NATURAL, UNNATURAL, AND SUPERNATURAL.
THE HEROIC, AND VILLAINOUS.
THE ADVENTUROUS, BIZARRE, AND THE GLAMOROUS.

NEW LOOK

AN EXTRAORDINARY NEW MAGAZINE FROM BOB GUCCIONE.

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Publisher's Page

Well, the you-know-what has certainly hit the fan! And while on the surface it appears that the censorship problems being discussed in the media these days pertain only to sex magazines, films, and videos, we would be closing our eyes to reality if we believed that what starts there will end there.

Any time a small group of fanatics moves heaven and earth to effect legislation that will change the ways in which all of us live our lives, then it is time for all of us to be frightened. While you and I (hypothetically speaking, of course) may not be interested in the sexual exploits of others, it does not mean that *some* others are not interested in ours. While you and I might be willing to live and let live, these same others are not. And they mean to impose their will on all of us.

What *we* find specifically frightening is the possibility that these people will get what they want in the marketplace: no more sexually oriented materials to be sold to anyone, adults included. Why? Because their next foray into the field of human behavior — if they are successful this time — may be an attack on our political views, those that differ with theirs, or with a different group of fanatics. Suppose this or another group decides they don't like the way some of us practice our religions, or the fact that some of us don't practice any religion at all? It seems fairly obvious to us that one successful assault on one freedom guaranteed by our Constitution will lead to more assaults on other freedoms. Do women and blacks really want to take a chance on losing their voting powers? Do non-Christians really want to take a chance on having to live in a country with a state sanctioned religion?

Small possibility of any of this happening, you might be thinking; no way will we regress to *that* level of government. But you're wrong if you think that. This nation was founded by people who learned that fanatics once in power are able to do whatever they choose, because power means the ability to do anything.

Let us, we who like to read, who think, who live probably very nice ordinary lives, let us understand that the censorship fight now going on is our fight. As citizens of this country, we cannot sit by and let the rights of others be abrogated without offering some kind of assistance. If we do, then we get what we deserve: there will be no one there to help us when our own rights are abrogated. Pastor Martin Niemoller, a famous activist against Nazism some four decades ago, said it best:

"In Germany, they first came for the communists and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a communist. Then they came for the Jews but I didn't

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speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists. Then they came for the Catholics but I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me but by this time there was no one left to speak up."

Please write your congressman, senator, the president, whomever and however many government officials you can and tell them you are an adult who enjoys freedom of choice and wishes — *intends* — to go on exercising that freedom.

Let's not wait until it's too late and there's nothing to say except, "I should have. . .when I had the chance."

ABOUT. . .
People

Tom "Rider" McDowell, American born free-lance journalist who formerly plied his trade in London and Paris, now resides in New York City and counts the United States his journalistic territory. He has just completed his first thriller novel, for which we wish him tons of Good Luck!

Catherine Logan has been writing novels for eight years and though unpublished as yet has British agents who are most encouraging. She sent us her first ever short story (we couldn't be happier — it's great!) and we're hoping she'll become a "regular" at ESPIONAGE. A world traveler, young son and daughter notwithstanding, Logan has just recently made her newest home in Israel.

While serving four years with military intelligence, eight years as a police officer specializing in forensics, and ten years as a freelance investigator for attorneys may not be required for all espionage writers, his experiences have certainly served Steve Mitchell well. He's sold us a couple of

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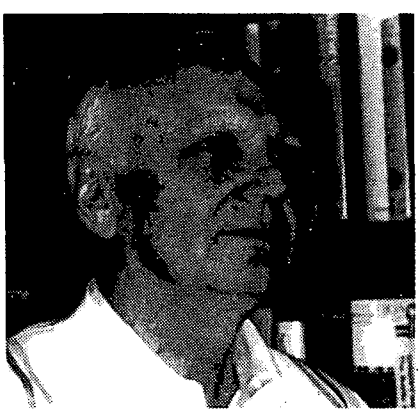
stories already and is doing very well for a Johnny-come-lately in the writing business.

Phillip Ballard is a teacher, a carpenter, and a freelance writer, who enjoys travel, photography, and collecting political campaign memorabilia. He's also a new contributor to ESPIONAGE. Welcome, Phil.

Esther K. Schulz wrote her first spy story for us. Her published credits include short stories for children, two of which have been included in anthologies, several nostalgia pieces, book reviews and music reviews. She is also a past-president of the Santa Cruz County (California) branch of the *National League of American Pen Women.* Besides her writing career, Mrs. Schulz is a retired librarian and musician. Whew.



Prior to submitting materials to ESPIONAGE, Duane Crowley placed a number of stories with *Dialogue Magazine* and won the "Victorin Award" for the best fiction printed in that publication in 1981. Otherwise, Duane flew in B-25s during WWII and in B-29s in the Korean Conflict, including some reconnaisance missions over Soviet Russia. He holds the retired rank of Lt. Colonel, USAF.

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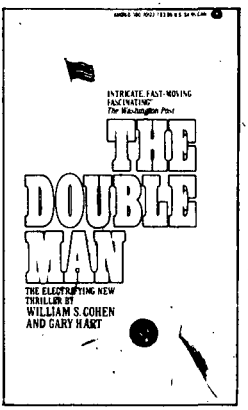
ABOUT. . . Books

by Brian Burley


INTRIGUE, FAST-MOVING FASCINATING!
The Washington Post
THE DOUBLE MAN
THE ELECTRIFYING NEW THRILLER BY WILLIAM S. COHEN AND GARY HART

THE DOUBLE MAN, by William S. Cohen and Gary Hart. Published by Avon Books, New York, NY, Feb., 1986. PB, 342 pp.

Senator Tom Chandler, a presidential hopeful, is a most unlikely protagonist in this ho-hum novel of terrorism and conspiracy. After a brutal terrorist attack wipes out the family of Chandler's best friend, U.S. Secretary of State Woodrow Wilson Harrold, on a Washington D.C. street, Chandler is appointed to head up the investigation. Interpreting his mandate broadly, Chandler investigates a diverse brew of current and past terrorist events, including the assassination of President Kennedy, and the role of the Soviet Union in international terrorism. The investigation steps on the feet of a number of high ranking persons, including the "Double Man" of the title, an unidentified Soviet mole high in the ranks of the Senate Intelligence Committee. Chandler pushes on, despite all attempts to stop him.

The authors spend a great deal of time showing us the inner workings of the U.S. Senate, and the mechanism of an investigation of this type. We are also treated to a large dose of "justification" for close congressional supervision of the intelligence process. Some of the background of this story is interesting and valuable, but, on the whole, I just couldn't get into it.

HEMINGWAY'S NOTEBOOK, by Bill Granger. Published by Crown Publishers, Inc., New York, NY, 1986. HB, 248 pp.

This is the 6th of Granger's "November Man" novels. As this one opens, "November," also known as Devereaux, is

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living quietly in Lausanne with Rita Macklin. As far as he knows, all of the agencies that were looking for him think he is dead. The devious Colonel Ready knows better, however. When he needed Devereaux in an unsavory plot, he found just the right way to get his attention: Ready kidnapped Rita and threatened to expose Devereaux if he did not cooperate. Having no choice, Devereaux agrees to help. Soon he and Rita are on their separate ways to the impoverished Caribbean island of St. Michel, where Ready is the head of the army.

This is one of the better wheels-within-wheels stories I've come across recently. Ready's plot is much more complex than it first appears, and Devereaux is faced with a supreme challenge in foiling it. The best part, however, is Devereaux's revenge. When this is completed, not only has Ready gotten his just desserts but Devereaux has also set in motion events which will put the myth of "November" to rest forever. A good read. Recommended.

MOSCOW RULES, by Robert Moss. Published by Pocket Books, NY, NY, December, 1985. PB,439 pp.

The idea of a change in government of the Soviet Union is not one which has been well explored in our genre, perhaps because the writers felt it was so improbable it was not worth bothering with, or that the resultant world without the "evil empire" would be simply indescribable. Well, here is the fantasy most of us have been waiting for.

Sasha Preobrazhinsky is a high ranking member of Soviet Military Intelligence, the GRU. He also has family connections in high places and thus has access to the best that Soviet society has to offer. The first part of the book traces his career, from impoverished student to his enlistment in the army, and his rise through the ranks. We see him training with the Soviet Special Forces, the Spetsnaz, follow him through a "diplomatic" posting in New York, and finally to a command in Afghanistan, where he is severely wounded.

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All through this period, he is becoming more and more dissatisfied with what he sees around him. When he returns to Moscow, he attempts to do something about it.

The description of Soviet society and of the GRU that is presented here is highly authentic, showing much of the same background as INSIDE SOVIET MILITARY INTELLIGENCE reviewed favorably in this column recently. Authorities differ as to whether the kind of coup mounted by Preobrazhinsky could succeed in real life, but the fictional version is quite plausible. The book as a whole is a very fine read. Even knowing what happened (I read the last pages after the first chapter), I couldn't put it down until I'd found out *how* it happened. I would really like to see a sequel to this one. Highly recommended.

A TALK WITH THE ANGELS, by Desmond Meiring. Published by St. Martin's Press, New York, NY, 1985. HB, 293 pp.

Islamic terrorists in Cairo had reason to dislike and fear Tarek Daniel Gad. As a colonel in charge of a secret anti-terrorist police group, he had interfered several times with their attempts to establish a fundamentalist Islamic Republic in Egypt. So when members of the Malaikat es-Sayf, the Angels of the Sword, saw one of their brothers talking furtively to Gad, the deaths of both became necessary. Gad, however, was not an easy man to kill. With the aid of his long time partner Sergeant Raafat Khalil, and a little help from Israeli Intelligence, he puts a stop to the Angels' plan for "an anniversary of an anniversary."

Gad is an interesting and well developed character. As a moderate, non-Islamic, Egyptian patriot, he is a fine vehicle for conveying author Meiring's informed outsider's outlook and familiarity with Cairo and with Middle Eastern affairs

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in general. Meiring also portrays the terrorists as intelligent and highly dedicated young people with real grievances; the alternating shifts of viewpoint make for an interesting read. You might even pick up a word or two of Arabic or Hebrew. Highly recommended.

LOADED QUESTIONS, by Philip Loraine. Published by St. Martin's Press, New York, NY, 1986. HB, 176 pp.

Steve Lathan had a secret past, and it caused him nightmares and fainting spells. Holly Lathan also had one, and it was tied in with her husband's, but he didn't know it. Tom Wood and David Cameron were top notch investigative reporters for a top British newspaper, and the story they were on would have the by-product of bringing the Lathans' little secrets into the open. They were all brought together by the manipulations of Anthony Markham, whose motives for stirring up a ten year old mess were not what they seemed.

This is a small book, bursting with ideas. The various secrets of the past, and the motives of the puppet master when revealed, are consistent and make sense. I think it could have been a very good book if the author had expanded on the ideas and the action and developed the characters more. As it was, the book was far too short, and as I write this review two days after I've finished the book, only some hints of the complexity of the character of Markham remain in my memory. I did enjoy it, in a mild way, and I think the average reader will, too, but I'd wait for the paperback.

THE GOLD FRAME, by Herbert Resnicow. Published by Avon Books, New York, NY, 1986. PB, 246 pp.

Alexander Gold is a brilliant, unorthodox, overweight detective in the mold of Nero Wolfe. His unorthodoxy ex-

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tends to his refusal to call himself a detective: he is a consultant. His adventures are narrated by his wife Norma, who is a bit of a character, herself, and who, of course, contributes to his investigations. Again, like Nero Wolfe, there is very little action in the book: Gold is a quiet, methodical investigator, who makes great leaps of logic to solve the mystery. The book is carried by the characters.

In this case, the Golds are called upon to solve the mystery of a painting that ought to be a fake, and isn't. Their client, the wealthy patron of a museum, is an old scoundrel whose intelligence and deviousness are almost the equal of Alexander Gold. The two villains, one of whom becomes the victim, are also high on the sneaky/nasty index. Eventually, Gold reveals an ingenious way to commit an impossible murder to a Wolfean gathering of the characters. All in all, the story is a four-way battle of wits that carries the reader along with it. This is the pick of the bunch this time. Highly recommended.

THE RIGHT TO SING THE BLUES, by John Lutz. Published by St. Martin's Press, New York, NY, 1986. HB, 175 pp.

Private Investigator Nudger is an ex-cop in his own, not very successful, private business. He's based in St. Louis and has friends on the local Police force. His love life is not what he would like it to be. Sound familiar? It is, but it is redeemed somewhat by the character, himself, and by competent writing. There have been several previous Nudger novels. In this one, Nudger is called to New Orleans on behalf of a friend of a friend, who runs a jazz club, to investigate someone who doesn't quite add up. Nudger looks around, and things certainly *don't* add up. He meets his share of baddies, gets knocked around a bit, and eventually everything works out all right.

I liked the character, who is one of those all too human types popular in recent detective fiction. If I come across another book featuring him, I will probably remember him enough to want to read it. I have never been in New Orleans but some of the brief descriptive passages made me wonder what it might be like to go there. In short, I enjoyed the book, in a mild sort of way. I only wish it had been longer, so that the character could be explored in more detail.

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ABOUT. . .
Video

by Carl Martin

There's good news: the price of pre-recorded videocassettes may be coming down. Public-domain features have always been reasonably priced, although their quality has varied from excellent to unviewable, and the large companies have offered occasional promotions where the suggested retail price of a tape might be as low as $24.95, but Prism Entertainment has just released a number of copyrighted titles with a suggested price of only $11.95! That's lower than many of the ancient public domain titles.

I haven't seen the titles Prism is offering, so I can't really recommend them, however, THE GATHERING STORM, which stars Richard Burton as Winston Churchill, sounds as though it may be of particular interest to *Espionage* readers. So, the next time you're in your favorite video store, ask about these bargain tapes. Any effort to cut prices *must* be encouraged.

This time there are a few outstanding films to talk about:

THE FALCON & THE SNOWMAN (Vestron Video; 1984; 131 min.; rated R) is the story of two very different boyhood friends who become involved in a deadly game of espionage, selling national secrets to the Russians. It stars Oscar winner Timothy Hutton as Christopher Boyce, the son of an FBI agent and the brains of the pair, and Sean Penn as his friend and courier. The film is based upon an Edgar Award-winning fact crime book. If anything, the film is even more gripping than the book, thanks to the outstanding performances of its two young stars. The reproduction is very good, too.

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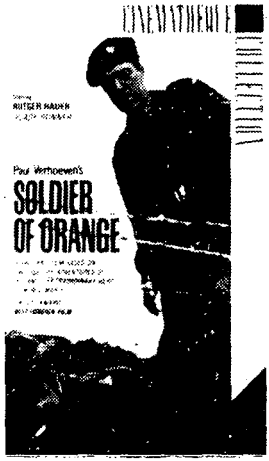
KILLER FORCE (Vestron Video; 1975; 100 min.; NR) is the story of a small group of mercenaries pitted against the security force at a large African diamond mine. In a totally unsympathetic role, Telly "Kojac" Savalas plays the security chief; Hugh O'Brian, O.J. Simpson and Christopher Lee are mercenaries; and Peter Fonda is—well, you'd better see the movie and decide for yourself. There's plenty of action and enough twists and turns of plot to keep your hand off the pause button.



SOLDIER OF ORANGE (Cinematheque Collection from Media Home Entertainment; 1978; 144 min.; NR) is the true story of one of Holland's WWII resistance heroes and stars Rutger Hauer in the film that brought him to the attention of American audiences. The film is in Dutch with English subtitles, but don't let that put you off. I usually hate movies where I have to read the dialogue, but I loved this one. And since about half the scenes take place in England or with English characters, there isn't as much reading as you might expect. Happily, it's a high-quality reproduction, and that extends to the subtitles — they are sharp, clear, and well-defined.

There are three outstanding offerings that won't have very broad appeal. However, the viewers who like them, will like them very much:

DICK TRACY'S G-MEN (Video Communications, Inc.; 1939; 305 min.; NR) is a 15-chapter serial based very loosely on the popular comic-strip character created by Chester Gould. Here, Dick Tracy is an FBI agent and his foe is Zarnoff,

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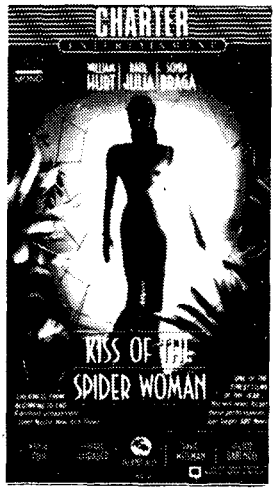
an international spy and espionage agent who is after America's secrets. Each chapter ends in a cliff-hanger that adds to the fun. This is a chance to "return to those thrilling days of yesteryear," as the Lone Ranger's announcer used to say. If you're old enough, this will bring back fond memories of Saturday matinees, nickel popcorn, the delighted screams of your friends. If you're not, it's still a campy treat. One of ten Dick Tracy serials and features offered by the company, it stars Ralph Byrd and Phyllis Isley.



KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN (Charter Entertainment; 1985; 119 min.; rated R) is the story of a friendship that begins in a brutal Latin American prison. Two very different men, a political prisoner and a convicted, homosexual child-molester, share the same cell. William Hurt (remember GORKY PARK?) won the "Best Actor" award at the Cannes Film Festival for his role as the homosexual, and Raul Julia is equally strong in his role as the political prisoner. Through flashbacks and "movies" the homosexual tells to entertain his cell partner, we learn about the characters and how they came to be where they are. Brazilian actress Sonia Braga stars in the movies-within-the-movie in three separate roles, including the title character. This is a strong, realistic film, not for the squeamish, but its story of prison life, heroism, and emotional love is too full of intelligence and wit to miss. It's a very moving film I plan to see again.

MADMAN (United Entertainment, Inc.; 1979; 92 min.; rated PG) stars Sigourney Weaver, Michael Beck, Alan Feinstein and F. Murray Abraham in a badly flawed film that has some great moments. Actually, there are three stories: Russian immigrant Boris Abramovitch arrives in Israel filled with hatred and longing for revenge against the Russians. He manages to get himself assigned a military border post

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opposite a place where Russian advisors are staying and refuses to let anything come between him and his vengeance. Stan Gould, a New York doctor serving in the Israeli army, is having trouble deciding whether to stay or return to the U.S. And Marco Cohen, a small-time pimp and malingerer, just wants to get his service time over so he can get back to his life. Any of the three stories might have been good enough to make a movie, but none of them are told very well. However, F. Murray Abraham (remember him in AMADEUS?) nearly steals the film in his role as the pimp. It needed a better writer and director—in this case, they were both the same man. But the film is worth seeing despite its flaws.

"I TOLD you not to fly over Soviet air space!"

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ABOUT. . . Other Things

by Ernest Volkman

A New Plan for Soviet Defectors

Accumulating evidence that the CIA has grievously botched its job of handling Soviet defectors has led to a drastic plan: the job will be taken away from the agency and given to the FBI. The plan, which is certain to restir the historic resentment between the two agencies, was formulated after the abortive Yurchenko affair and continuing publicity about the agency's inept handling of other defectors.

A Spy Scandal Brewing?

There may be a real nasty spy scandal brewing within the American "star wars" apparatus, currently the most closely-guarded of all American military development programs.

The program, a high-priority target of the KGB, may in fact have been penetrated. First, a high-level engineer working on "star wars" research has disappeared. The engineer had a top secret security clearance, and his recent mysterious disappearance, some counterintelligence officials fear, might mean he has gone behind the Iron Curtain.

Worse was the even more mysterious suicide of an Army colonel, who was involved in secret research. Army officials claim the suicide was probably the result of charges that he may have committed what were described as "minor travel improprieties," an account that makes little sense: why would a highly-decorated Army colonel commit suicide over such a relative triviality?

The real fear is that the two events may be related; in other words, both the colonel and the engineer were selling secrets to the Soviets. When the engineer disappeared, the colonel, assuming the man had defected, feared his own spying would be exposed and committed suicide. It's only a theory, at this point, but it makes a lot more sense than the official Army version.

The He/She/It Case

French counterintelligence officials are still trying to figure this one out.

It seems that Bernard Boursicot, a junior member of the French Foreign Service, was posted to Peking in 1967. Boursicot had a security clearance for the sensitive post, but a background check

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failed to reveal that he had an abiding passion for female flesh. In fact, something of an obsession, a danger signal in the world of Cold War espionage, for too passionate an attachment to the female of the species tends to make a man in a sensitive position vulnerable to certain forms of blandishment.

Which leads us to an individual thus far identified only as a "Madame Wong." According to the French sleuths, Ms. Wong, an exquisitely beautiful female singer with the Chinese opera (a highly-regarded art form in China), attracted Boursicot's attention. And before you could say "Look out, Bernard," he had fallen hopelessly, madly, and passionately in love with her.

As the relationship deepened, Wong began pressing her French lover for details on the interesting secrets he had spotted during work at the embassy. And before long, Boursicot was bringing her little interesting tidbits, much as another lover might bring candy or flowers.

Thus far, it all sounds like the classic espionage scenario. As any reader might have guessed by now, Ms. Wong was an agent of Chinese intelligence, who had set about to ensnare M'sieur Boursicot. But there is an extra little twist: Ms. Wong is, in fact, *Mr.* Wong. Despite outwardly female beauty, Wong, French counterintelligence agents discovered, was mostly a man. That is to say, he/she/it was both

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male *and* female.

That discovery led the French agents back to Boursicot: they wondered whether the diplomat had ever determined his lover's sex. Boursicot was shocked to hear that his lover was not entirely female and claimed he had no idea of any gender confusion.

This has left everybody scratching their heads. Think of the implications: a Frenchman, of all people, did not make a positive determination of a lover's gender? *Sacre bleu!*

On a more serious note, meanwhile, Boursicot is in very big trouble. The French government has charged him with spying, along with (fill in the blank) Wong.

Musical Chairs in Romania

Life has been difficult for Lieutenant General Nicolae Plesita, head of the Romanian intelligence service. Eight years ago, one of his top aides defected to the CIA and told all the secrets of Plesita's office. Infuriated, Romanian leader Nicolae Ceausecu bounced Plesita out of his job (for a while, there were rumors that Plesita was so deeply in disgrace he had been sent to work as an ordinary laborer on road construction projects). But Plesita managed to talk himself back into his job by dint of what must have been one of the greatest self-defenses of all time.

Things were running smoothly again for Plesita—until last month, when another top aide defected, this time to the British. Now even more enraged, Ceausecu fired Plesita again. And this time he's not coming back! Honest!

The Earhart Case

The case of Amelia Earhart has continued to fascinate students of espionage for several decades, ever since her plane disappeared in the Pacific in 1937.

There have been persistent whispers for years that the famed aviatrix, although officially on a long-distance flight, was actually doing some espionage on the side to check up on fortifications being built on Japanese-held islands. Other reports suggest her plane crash-landed on Japanese territory after mechanical trouble forced it down; the Japanese, worried that she might later reveal the extent of their secret fortifications, killed her and hid the body in an unmarked grave, then destroyed her plane.

No evidence has ever been found to prove these assertions, but new material has recently come to light which suggests that Earhart did meet with death at the hands of the Japanese. According to this new evidence, natives in the area where her plane crashed say they saw the Japanese take her away, and also saw her plane being lifted out of the water by a Japanese vessel.

What happened to Earhart after that? The eyewitnesses don't know but point out that after she was taken away they never saw her again.

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LETTERS
TO THE EDITOR

Dear Jackie:

Last Friday I had the pleasure of substitute-teaching a class of third-graders at the American elementary school here in Erlangen, West Germany. I had them writing short stories at English time, and thought you'd get a kick out of the enclosed, by eight-year-old Vincent Byrd.

TRAVELING SPI'S
by Vincent Byrd

Once upon a time there was a famous family that traveled around the world. One day they took an airplane to Russia. They were really spi's for America so they can find out when and where Russia plans to drop the bom. When they arived they went to the luggage area and got there luggage. When the luggage man asked him to open the luggage he did and got thru O.K. (The spy weapons were under all the clothes.) So they took a taxi to a hotel the taxi driver took them to the wrong hotel and that was the Russian headquarters so they snooped around and found out when the Russians were going to atack. They were going to atack at 1400 hours tomorrow so that day they took the next Jet plane to America. When they got back they told Commander Brown he told the Genarls, Corpals, Captains, Sargants, G.i.'s, M.P.'s and the privates. The next day they were ready. There were traps in the woods, minds under the ground. The Soiders had garnaids, knifes, exploses and electric machine guns. That day the war began exzacaly the time the spi's reported. The war lasted eight days and twenty hours. That was the longest war in war history. That day was a real happy day for the army.

They had many other wars but there was never a war worst and longer than the war you just read about.

THE END

If you print this, I'm sure several of your armament-hip readers will write in to bitch about the electric machine guns—but my own opinion is that they add exzacaly the right touch to the piece.

And by the way: if you *do* want to print Vincent's story, you can send the check to me and I'll see that he gets it. I won't even subtract an agent's commission—but when the movie rights sell, I'm

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taking my 10%!

Josh Pachter
Erlangen, West Germany

Dear Josh (and Vincent): The check is in the mail. Honest! I'm sure our readers will enjoy Vincent's story as much as we did. And, Vincent, you're surely the youngest paid, published author ever! Congratulations!

Dear Editor:

Recently I started a subscription to your magazine, and I must say that I enjoyed it. I wish that I had known about it earlier. I expect my future issues will be just as good as my first issues were.

One story that prompted me to write was the two-parter, "Non-Interference, by Janwillem Van de Wetering. The author used the ninja in the story and, though I enjoyed the first installment, the conclusion let me down.

The author described the ninja as being Chinese. Well, the ninja may have had Chinese origins but ninja is Japanese. They got their start in feudal Japan working as spies and assassins. Much of what they did in Japanese history is lost but the art of ninjitsu is still kept alive.

The throwing star, shuriken, was originally called "shaker." Shuriken were throwing dirks or spikes. Today it is popular to call the throwing star or the dirks, shuriken.

The use of the shuriken was not for killing. It was better suited for harassing an opponent. They may have been dipped in a poison to kill but usually they were not.

The ninja were masters of disguise. The two businessmen (in the story) could have been the ones who murdered Mr. Dzung. Since they were suspects, all they would have had to do is act clumsy and all suspicion would be erased.

As I stated, I was a little bit displeased with the conclusion. I could think of other ways of doing it but, if I had, I am sure someone else would be displeased. I could never have come up with this ending but I know that, when I think about it, it makes sense.

I enjoyed your interview with David Morrell. I read *First Blood* after the movie came out but missed it at the box office. I enjoyed it. Then I read *Blood Oath*. That was good, too.

In short, I enjoy your magazine. The movie video cassette reviews, book reviews, and the stories, real and imagined, are all right. Keep it up and may next year be better than last.

James F. Heald
Ashland, KY

I think one of the best things about our "Letters to the Editor" column is the occasional letter wherein a reader tells us more about one element of a past story than we knew—or might ever know. Thanks for all your comments, Mr. Heald.

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Dear Editor:

Congratulations on reaching your anniversary issue. I wish you the best of luck and I have happily renewed my subscription.

I would like to take issue, however, with something Guy Graybill said in his article, "The War Which Never Ends," which appeared in the February '86 ESPIONAGE. After a summary of famous biblical spies, he says: "Really organized spy systems, however, didn't appear until the 17th century." This couldn't be farther from the truth. Spying is indeed the second oldest profession, and goes back as far as civilization itself. There is no lack of documentation to prove this, either. The ancient empires of Egypt, Assyria and Persia all had a well-developed tradition of centrally organized intelligence-gathering. They were both efficient and all-pervasive.

For the last two years, I have been teaching a course at Georgetown University on "Espionage in the Ancient World," and I'm happy to say we have not run out of ancient spies yet. Readers interested in pursuing this topic might look at Francis Dvornik's *Origins of Intelligence Services* as a good introduction to the subject.

Rose Mary Sheldon
Washington, D.C.

See what I mean about readers who know more than is generally known about a subject! After we received the above letter from Ms. Sheldon, we also received an article that is, coincidentally, our "guest" feature for "Spying Through Time" this month. Thanks for all of it, Rose Mary.

Dear Publisher:

I find the articles about real life spies very interesting. It's the old story: truth is stranger than fiction. If anyone had written a book similar to the recent Walker case, the critics would probably have dismissed it as impossible.

A little disappointed in the Quiller story—very obvious, and I do love the Quiller books. My top favorites are John Le Carré's *Tinker Tailor, Soldier, Spy,* Trevanian's *Shibumi,* Ludlum's *Bourne Identity.* Would like to see a list of the books you would consider to be the best spy stories for the past ten years. Keep up the good work!

A. Takirian
North Bergen, NJ

Ha! All I'm willing to own up to is having read all three of the above-named books, having liked all three of them, and having loved Shibumi.

Dear Ms. Lewis:

Congratulations on a remarkable First Anniversary issue. If you continue to publish stories of the high quality found therein the magazine should be around for many anniversaries to come. I especially liked the cover. The Queen of Spades is my favorite

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card and this one exemplifies her perfectly; beautiful but deadly. Keep up the good work.

Rik Hunik
Quesnel, B.C. Canada

Thanks! What is that expression: "From your mouth to God's ears!"

Dear Jackie:

Congratulations! You have brought ESPIONAGE Magazine to a level of skill, wit, variety, art, and just plain quality, that puts it on a par with any magazine on the shelf. I am currently enjoying—as well as admiring—your anniversary issue. It's really a magnificent piece of work, even without considering the short span of time the magazine has been in existence. If you ever had doubts about your ability to make it competitive, just thumb through what you've accomplished in your last issue. That should relieve all doubts.

Jack F. Dobbyn
Villanova, PA

Thanks, Jack. I can't tell you how pleased we are by your comments. Lets hope you'll find similar cause to rejoice with every issue. . .or at least every few issues!

Dear ESPIONAGE:

I could not find issue #5. Enclosed is $2.50 in hopes you will send me a copy of that issue

Your magazine has been needed a long time to fill a void for us spy buffs. Edward Hoch is my favorite. He is the best short story writer in America. Thanks for featuring him. Keep up the good work.

Jack L. Hammond
Mt. Dora, FL

You're welcome. And I'm sure your comments will bring a huge smile to Ed's face as well.

Dear ESPIONAGE:

I really enjoy ESPIONAGE from cover to cover. I especially enjoy the non-fiction pieces, such as "The Real Story of Ultra" and the Canaris article, and "The Flawed Soothsayer," about MacArthur's G-2. I like the two-part fictional stories as well.

Short stories are nice because you can finish them in one sitting, while I often don't have sufficient time to finish a full-length book. And the covers are just fine. Keep them the way they are.

Keep up the good work on an exceptional magazine. I am a subscriber and my subscription started with issue #3. I would like to have a complete collection of this magazine. I have also sent in my renewal already.

Thank you.

Neil A. Joslun
Waukegan, IL

Thanks for your lovely letter. We'll try to keep our stories short, their quality high, and our publication fresh and exciting.

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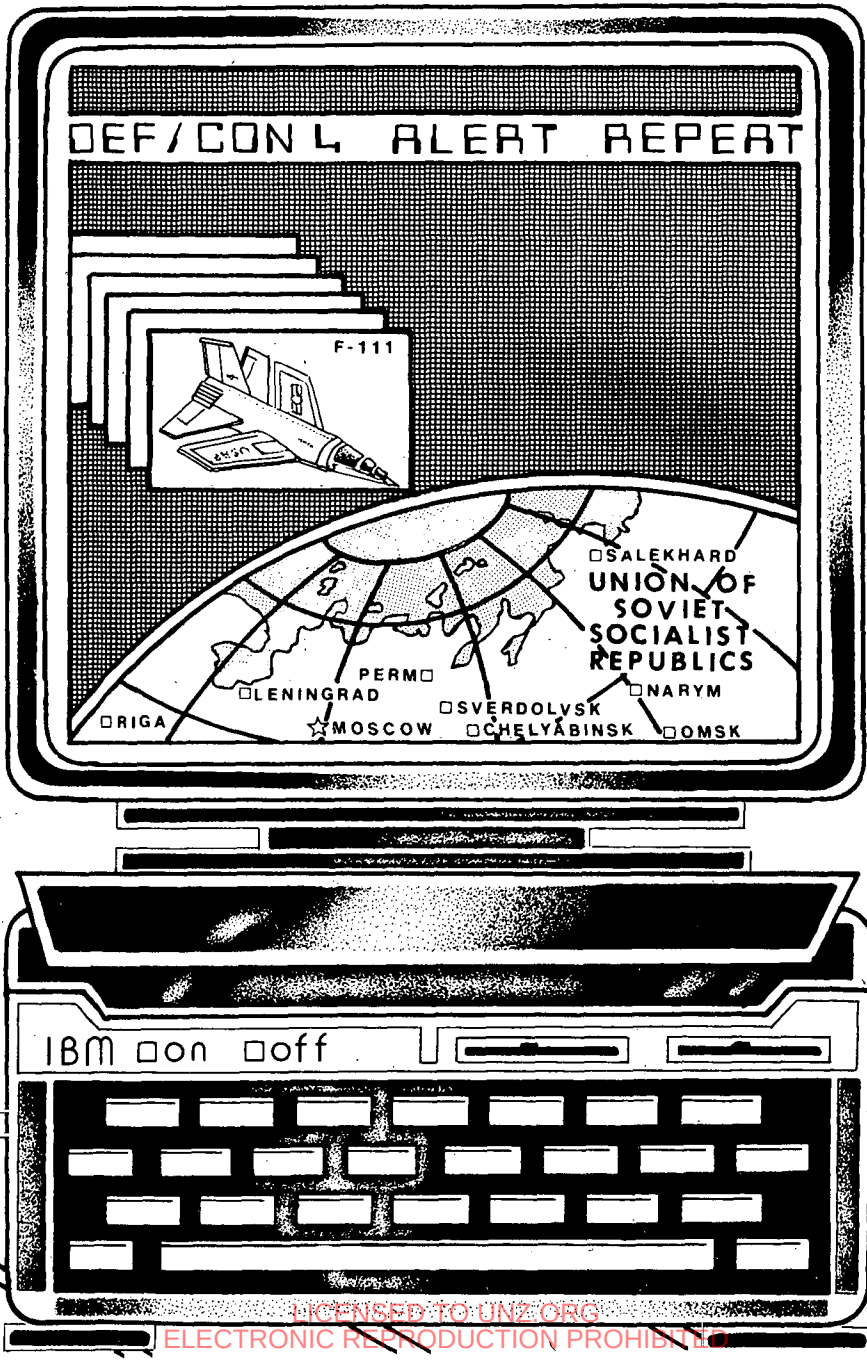

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WAR GAMES: Revisited

by Duane Crowley

A great deal of nonsense has been written about brilliant computer hackers gone wrong, who, through sheer genius, have broken computer security codes and opened secret files as easily as rolling back the top on a can of sardines. Much of this latter day mythology was fostered by the victimized administrators of computer systems and their motives were entirely self-serving. It's easy to admit to being the victim of genius when the alternative is a confession of ineptitude.

Take, for example, the movie, *War Games*. The premise is that through random dialing, a whiz kid has connected his computer with a Department of Science (DOD) computer. Using a trial and error (iterative) computer program, after fairly superficial research, he comes up with the password that allows him to give instructions that bring the world to the brink of war. Fantasy? Of course it is, but the viewer could only be persuaded to suspend belief if he thought that what was happening was in some way possible.

Of course, it would be rash to assume that the DOD dodo is extinct. Charles Fair, in his definitive book on military stupidity, *From The Jaws Of Victory,* counsels (with a singular lack of charity) that one

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"should never underestimate the wooden-headedness of a commander." In the case of *War Games,* however, the gentlemen with the brass bound bottoms would have to be exonerated. First, no DOD computer containing classified information or procedures would allow access on a dial-up basis. Sending classified information through a civilian exchange is a definite no—no. Business data processing management has long been aware of the dangers of allowing any yahoo with a computer to rustle around in their data base. Dial-up access to a corporate main frame is sometimes allowed but the prudent manager requires that the accessing terminal register a phone number so that the central computer can check a list of authorized numbers before the remote terminal is called back and a connection is reestablished. Assuming that our *War Games* hacker somehow made a phone connection, there is still the problem of the password. Even the most elementary home security system will not allow a burglar to keep trying until he stumbles over the correct security key. A computer system that does not abort transmission after a couple of bad passwords is no system at all. DOD systems have without exception avoided the key-on-the-nail-outside-the door approach.

(Data storage in a computer is completely analogous to data in a file drawer and must be safeguarded in a similar manner. It's doubtful that the custodian of a restricted file would hang the key to the drawer outside the office door but actions just as stupid have preceded the theft of data from computers.)

Is the myth of the brilliant but aberrant byte bandit a harmful one? Unfortunately, it is. Even today, thirty-five years after the first stored instruction computer came on the scene, there are many compu-phobes and some of them are at the top of the heap in business and government. They are paranoid about what that strange black box is doing to them and willing to accept the fiction that all of their secrets are accessible to anyone who has taken an elementary programming course in FORTRAN or BASIC. Consequently, the throughput of some systems is sometimes drastically curtailed in order to guard against shadowy threats no more likely than those dreamed up by a Hollywood script-writer. If half of a system is tied up protecting against hazards that have less than a .01 probability of ever occurring, your competitors will have you for lunch—whether they are Exxon Oil or Kremlin Information Systems. Computer security systems are like casualty

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"The legendary 'code that cannot be broken without a key' is very close to being a reality using a computer."

insurance; the cost should reflect the risk, and reasonable safeguards can be developed without mortgaging the ranch to guard against tidal waves.

To illustrate what bogus bogies can do to otherwise astute managers, consider the following case: An oil company was transmitting raw seismic data at high speed over dedicated lines linking two large computer complexes. Data representing even one drilling map took hours of transmission and smoothing the raw data to the point where it could be plotted took as long as six hours on the fastest computers available.

Predictably, certain echelons of management insisted that the transmissions constituted a security risk. Never mind that it would be necessary to duplicate a multi-million dollar installation to process the stolen data. Never mind that somehow the processing programs would have to be stolen along with the geographic code that located the exploration areas. And forget that intercepting high speed data on a dedicated line would require technology that would push the state of the art. The data must be scrambled, thus doubling transmission and processing costs. It was touch and go for a while but the decision finally went against the protectionists when it was shown that it would be far easier and infinitely cheaper for a competitor to steal an already plotted seismic chart. The greater risks were within the organization, not outside. In the words of the late, great Walt Kelly, "We have found the enemy and they are us."

What are the risks that an unauthorized outside expert will enter a system and tip-toe barefoot among the microchips, plucking a bit here and a byte there? Those experienced in the field have written that it just doesn't happen—without inside help; and in the vast majority of cases, it's done by someone (not a programmer) entering false data at a terminal within the installa-

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tion. The classic scam is perpetrated by a data entry clerk who sets up a dummy account and skims other accounts so that he can write a fat check from the dummy. The ability to do this is no proof of genius. It is, however, an indictment of the security built into the computer system. Talk with any accountant who has never moved beyond the green eyeshade and the calculator. He will tell you that his manual bookkeeping system will spotlight a series of questionable transactions through selected audit trails. The same safeguards should exist in a computer system.

There have been a spate of espionage trials recently and none of these have involved a breach of computer security systems. The realistic movie, *Falcon And The Snow Man,* portrayed Boyce as getting information from a computer terminal but only as a trusted insider with an input/output clearance. Software was not changed nor did it need to be. In these recent cases, insiders were able to furnish damaging information to the Soviets using nothing more hi-tech than a mimeograph machine or a shredder that wasn't used.

Assuming you can trust at least some of your own people, the computer does offer an unparalleled encrypting device, however. The cost of protecting a document is computer time, internal storage space and elapsed time at the access point. If the information is sensitive, encoding may be justified and the legendary "code that cannot be broken without a key" is very close to being a reality using a computer. The procedure employed is relatively simple: randomly generate a table of relative storage addresses for each character of your data. Store the characters on the basis of your table and you have effectively randomized character location in storage, making it practically impossible to read without employing the address table to bring the characters back to the original sequence.

Using another computer to come up with the storage sequence without the table is theoretically possible but, in practice, requires a number of trials approaching infinity as a limit. With this crypt, the only thing that must be guarded is the address table. Somebody at some level must have access to the table and that person must be trustworthy. It should be possible to ensure that no top seeded hacker in Donkey Kong can get at your table.

Finally, it must be noted that the computer is not immune to the old wooden sabot in the gear box trick—sabotage. Software, the collection of instructions which constitute a pro-

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gram, is most vulnerable to this evil. Particularly insidious is the programmed time bomb, a trap which is tripped at some future date when the perpetrator is well out of harm's way. Here again, the saboteur needs an administration that would rather not know what is going on in their computers. That was the case in circumstances that took place some five years ago in an organization that shall remain nameless.

A programmer had developed a system for the organization that was critical to operations, both in this country and beyond the continental limits. The first management error was that no one had insisted that the program be documented. It was very complex and the only one who knew the path through the maze of instructions was the creator. Whenever problems occurred, he was called in, and after an elapsed time calculated to prove the difficulty of the problem, a solution was arrived at. Nobody worried too much about these small glitches until someone noticed a pattern. It seemed that our programmer agreed with the poet and felt an overwhelming desire "to be in England, now that spring is here." Every year in late April or early May, he would be called to London to repair an unaccountable bug in the system that seemed to appear from nowhere. After some two or three days, the system was operable again and, after expending some weeks of his vacation time, the programmer returned to the States with English roses in his cheeks and visions of Soho ladies dancing in his head. This continued far longer than a reasonable person would credit but ultimately a curious London programmer looked in the right place and the time bomb was exposed. One might assume that the miscreant was thereafter soundly thrashed and dismissed without a recommendation but that was not the case. He was fired, right enough, but then immediately taken on again as a consultant at a price twice that of his old salary. The organization desperately needed someone with his unique knowledge to document the system.

In this real world, the wages of sin is all too often more wages. ■

SPY TALK: *Dead Babies* - having a "pocket full of dead babies" indicates someone has plenty of false identification; refers to the use of real birth certificates (of people who died in infancy) to generate "real" false I.D.s.

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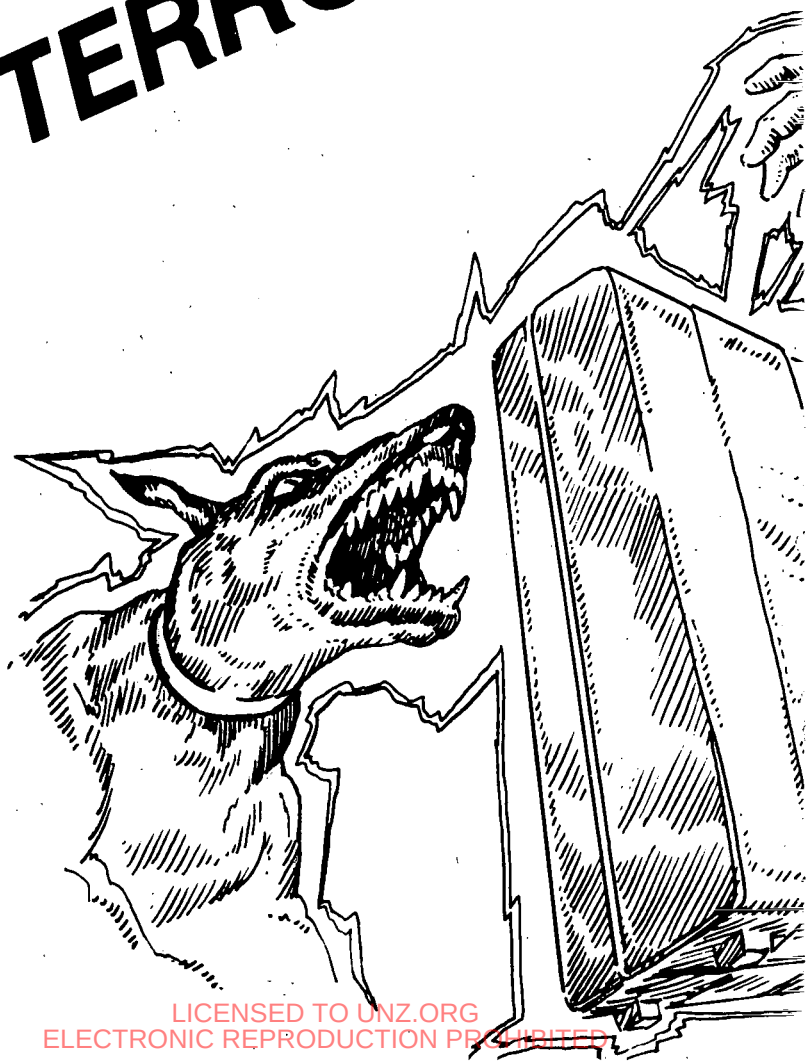
INTERROGATION

By Steve Mitchell



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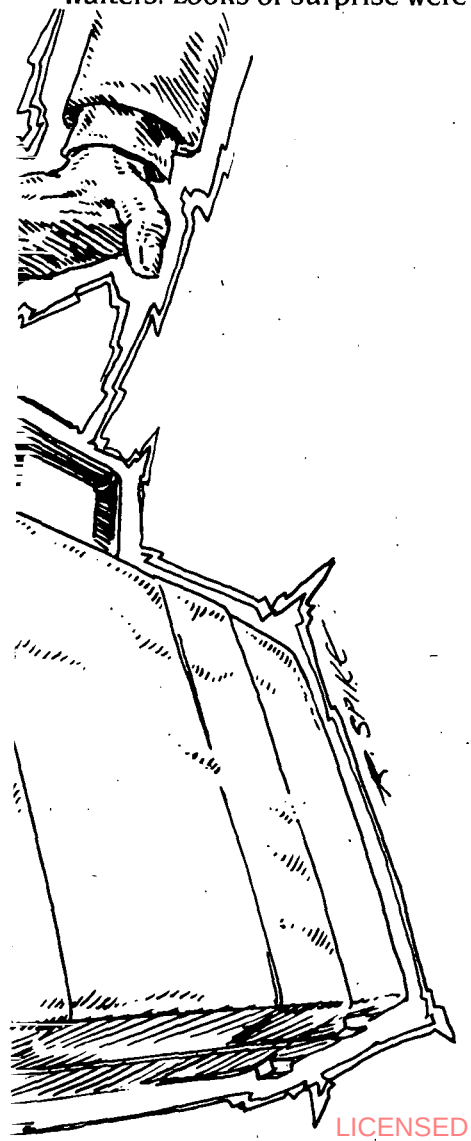
The noise from the dozen or so typewriters in the room ceased abruptly as all heads turned to watch Dick Walters. Looks of surprise were on everyone's faces. They'd never seen Walters burst from his office at a run before; nor had they ever seen him fail to knock before entering the large double-doors to General Lawrence's office. This time, however, he threw the doors open, rushed in, and slammed them shut behind him.



The low-keyed buzzing of the clerks' conversations became almost as loud as their typing had been. Here at the top secret headquarters of the CIA's Domestic Security Section, such activity could only mean an imminent disaster was in the works.

It wasn't generally known that the CIA was involved in activities within the United States. Most people thought this to be FBI territory. The Domestic Section of the CIA, however, acted as liaison between their Foreign Section and the FBI's Anti-Subversive Activities Section. The consensus among the chattering office clerks was that something bigger than they'd ever handled before was about to break.

General Arthur Lawrence, U.S. Army, Retired, looked up from his desk as his second-in-command burst into his private office. He lowered the pen in his hand, pulled his bifocals down a bit further on his nose and peered over them. He winced at the loud slamming noise made by the heavy wooden doors.

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"We have an urgent problem, General."

The General straightened himself in his chair. Speaking as much to himself as to Dick Walters, he said, "So I gather. What else would bring you in here like an enemy artillery shell?"

Walters stopped at the General's desk, placed both hands on its edge and leaned forward. He spoke only one word, "Kamechek."

The General leaned back in his high-backed leather chair, pulling the glasses from his face entirely. He tapped one earpiece against his chin as he spoke: "Kamechek . . . aaahhhh, yes. Colonel Yuri Kamechek, in charge of the KGB's Subversive Activities Section. Last seen in Cuba about a month ago; probably keeping a close eye on the current goings-on in Central America. What about him?"

"He's here. He arrived at Dulles Airport about fifteen minutes ago, on a flight from Mexico City. The problem is, he happened to arrive on the same flight as a drug dealer the D.C. Police were expecting. When the plane touched down, they turned their dogs loose on the luggage. They picked up the guy they were looking for, with a pound of Mexican brown heroin in his suitcase. They also turned up ten pounds of pure white—in Kamechek's bag. They've got him at Airport Security and he's waving his Diplomatic Passport, screaming about immunity."

The General's eyes narrowed. "Who've we got there?"

"Brandon and Ellis. They were covering incoming flights."

"Any of his people there?"

"I'm afraid so, General. Ellis says he spotted two KGB agents, probably Kamechek's reception committee. They saw what happened and were on the phone at the same time he was."

General Lawrence smacked his fist on the desk, angrily. "Damn! Just once I'd like to get my hands on that weasel!" As suddenly as it appeared, the General's anger was gone; a slow smile crept across his face. "By God, maybe this time I will." He looked up at Walters and asked, "Are our people equipped with DEA identification?"

Puzzled, Walters answered, "Drug Enforcement Agency? Uh . . . yeah, they should be."

The General was grinning now. "Good. Have them identify themselves as Drug Enforcement Agents and take the good Colonel into custody. The KGB people will be right on

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their tails, so they'll have to lose them. When our men are absolutely sure they've ditched them, have them call in for further instructions. If we move quickly enough, we may just catch the KGB as unprepared as we are."

Dick Walters was already reaching for the phone on the General's desk as he answered, "Yes, Sir." After relaying the instructions, Walters clamped his hand over the phone and turned to the General. "Ellis says they should be able to get rid of the two KGB men without a problem. The only vehicle they've got is a limousine flying the Soviet Embassy flags. He's also confirmed that the Russians don't have any other people there."

General Lawrence chuckled. "Excellent. Tell them to make it look as though they're headed for Virginia. When they're sure they've gotten rid of them, have them cut westward and call in as soon as they get to Louisville, Kentucky. It may take a while, so have them sedate Kamechek."

Walters repeated the information into the phone, hung up, and sat down across from the General. "Don't you want to send them directly to a safe-house?" he asked.

"The way I have it figured, Kamechek's two buddies will head back to the Embassy. Their people will contact the DEA, first thing, and demand his release. The DEA will deny having him. Then they'll call the State Department and have State do their work for them. State will call DEA and DEA will again deny. Then State will smell a rat and get onto the FBI. They'll also deny. At that point, they'll only have one choice left and they'll get hold of CIA, Foreign Section. Once our counterparts in Foreign find out what's going on, they'll be in touch with us."

Smiling, Walters added, "And that's when we hand him over to Foreign, right?"

The General laughed. "Not a chance. They'd ship him right back to his Embassy to avoid an incident. I'd say we've got until tomorrow to get him safely stashed away before the Director gets on to me."

Nervously, Walters asked, "What happens then?"

"Then, Dick, my boy, I'm going to stick my neck out and deny any knowledge of Yuri Kamechek's disappearance. That should buy us another 24 hours before our own people start checking our safe-houses."

Walters was silent as he considered the General's action. Slowly, he said, "That's only 48 hours. What makes you think

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we'll even be close to breaking Kamechek in that short a time?"

Patiently, the General explained, "I'm as much of a realist as you are, Dick. I doubt if we can break him in 48 hours. It gives us a two-day headstart, though—with Kamechek in Matt Cole's hands."

Surprised, Walters leaned forward: "You're not going to turn him over to Matt Cole? What if he ends up killing him?"

General Lawrence shrugged his shoulders. "What's the worst that could happen?" Answering his own question, he continued, "I'll be forced into a retirement that I'm looking forward to, and you'll end up getting a promotion."

"It also places all of our diplomats in Moscow in danger."

Displaying less patience, the General responded, "That's one of the hazards of the game. He's KGB's Chief of Subversive Activities. Sometimes," said the General, snapping his fingers, "decisions like this have to be made. Now, get Cole for me on the scrambler line."

After bringing Matt Cole up to date, the General went on to say, "When you pick him up in Louisville, I want you to take him somewhere out of the immediate area. Don't use any of our safe-houses. By late tomorrow, none of them will be safe. I don't want to know where you've got him, and I don't want to hear from you until you've got something to tell me. There's got to be tight security on this one, Matt. Both their side and ours will be looking for him.

"I don't have to tell you how important this is. My head is on the chopping block, and the only thing that's going to save it is a Kamechek feather in my cap. Use whatever means you think are necessary, but break him—and make it fast." The General listened to Cole's reply, then added, "I'm counting on you, Matt. Good luck."

General Lawrence looked over at Walters. "Well, it's just a question of time, now. Let's hope we have enough of it." Both men leaned back in their chairs, settling in for the long wait ahead of them.

It was dawn the following day when Cole and his hand-picked team brought the unconscious Kamechek to the vacant home of a friend. Cole knew his friend would be returning in a week, but that didn't matter. His timetable called for Colonel Kamechek to have been broken long before then.

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"You're not in a CIA safe-house, Colonel. There'll be ample time for me to accomplish whatever is necessary . . . Before I'm through with you, you'll sign this."

The sleeping Russian intelligence officer was carried into the master bedroom while Cole supervised security precautions and made certain other modifications in and around the house. The Russian awakened just before noon and found Cole dozing in a chair next to his bed.

The Colonel's movement brought Cole to sudden alertness. Kamechek smiled at him. "Good morning," said the Colonel. In flawless English, he continued, "From the looks of my surroundings, I would say that it wasn't the Drug Enforcement Agency that took me into custody. My guess would be CIA." Thoughtfully, Kamechek continued, "If that's so, I would imagine we're in a safe-house, probably in either Maryland or Virginia, and that would make you a representative of CIA's Foreign Section. Is that correct?" he asked.

Cole lifted his six foot, three inch frame from the chair and stepped closer to the bed. He noticed Kamechek looking him over, closely, possibly trying to match his physical description with those of known American agents. The Colonel, thought Cole, was sure to have an extensive set of files inside his head.

In a flat expressionless voice, Cole said, "Close, Colonel, but no cigar. Allow me to introduce myself; I'm Matthew Cole."

Yuri Kamechek's look of wide-eyed recognition was immediate. "Soooooo," he said slowly, "General Lawrence takes a gamble and I get to meet the famous 'Master Interrogator' of the Domestic Security Section. I've looked forward to meeting you."

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"Under different circumstances, no doubt," Cole smilingly shot back at him.

The Russian shrugged his shoulders. "I would find your methods of interrogation most informative under any circumstances. They must be quite effective; we've never gotten back any of our people that you've questioned.

"Mr. Cole, I've followed your career with admiration. Your prowess as an interrogator is unmatched. Four years with Naval Intelligence, five years with your Foreign Section, and the past two in Domestic. It's a shame I won't be with you long enough to satisfy my curiosity. You must know that very soon now your own people will be hunting for you." The Colonel waved a slender well-manicured hand around the room. "None of your safe-houses will be of any use to you."

Cole grinned at the smaller man, who was propping the pillows behind him. As the prisoner brought himself to a more comfortable sitting position, Cole replied, "You're not in a CIA safe-house, Colonel. This is the home of a friend. There'll be ample time for me to accomplish whatever is necessary."

The change in Kamechek's expression was barely perceptible, but it didn't go undetected by Cole's trained eye. His voice, however, remained confident. "Your time is short, Mr. Cole. What's it to be, physical torture, drugs, hypnosis perhaps? I doubt that you have as much as 48 hours. What phases of your methods will you divulge to me before I'm returned to my Embassy, eh?"

Cole removed a sheet of paper from his pocket and set it in front of the Russian. "Before I'm through with you, Colonel, you'll sign this."

Kamechek read the paper. It was an application to the U.S. State Department requesting political asylum. In disbelief, he exclaimed, "You expect me to defect!"

"That's right, Colonel. Very soon now, you'll no longer be an asset to the Soviet Government. My intention is to make you a liability to them. Once I've accomplished that, you'll sign this voluntarily. I'm sure you know how liabilities are treated by the powers-that-be in Moscow. You'll never make General, nor will you reach retirement age. You'll be lucky if you get a funeral with military honors."

The Colonel forced a laugh. "You must expect me to be with you for a considerable length of time, Mr. Cole. If that's to be the case, perhaps we shouldn't be so formal. Why don't

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you call me Yuri, and I'll call you Matt. After all, we may work on opposite sides of the fence but no fence is so big that it cannot be climbed."

"Is that a job offer, Yuri?"

Purposefully, Kamechek replied, "It wouldn't be the first time an American has become a double agent."

Cole laughed. "Double agents don't climb over fences, Yuri, they straddle them. To my way of thinking, that only makes them better targets for both sides."

The two men looked up as the door to the bedroom opened. It was one of Cole's men carrying a tray of food. "Ah, lunchtime," said Cole. "You must be hungry, Yuri. It's been a while since you've eaten. I hope you enjoy the meal we've prepared for you."

The tray was set down on a table next to the bed. Kamechek eyed it appreciatively. He seated himself at the table and ravenously cleaned the plates in a few short minutes. He poured himself a cup of coffee and sniffed the Cuban cigar that accompanied his meal. He leaned forward, accepting a light from Cole, then settled back, puffing on the cigar.

Between puffs, he said, "I imagine you're wondering why I was carrying ten pounds of heroin into the country."

Cole answered, "Not really. Unless your entire Embassy staff is addicted, I would think it's a payoff for someone in this country; probably for services rendered, or about to be rendered. I'd be more interested in who would want payment in drugs rather than cash. You'll be giving me that information before long."

Before the verbal sparring could continue, another of Cole's men entered the room. "Matt, Dr. Sullivan is here," he said.

Cole looked over at the Russian. He was sipping his coffee and puffing his cigar. "I'll have to leave you for a while, Yuri. I'll be back for another chat after I've helped the Doctor set up his equipment." Almost as an afterthought, he added, "I'll leave that paper, and a pen, on the nightstand for you—in case you should want to sign it."

The Colonel laughed loudly. "So, it's to be drugs or hypnosis, eh? Somehow, I expected something more spectacular from you, Matt."

Cole left the room without answering.

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It was almost two hours before Cole rejoined the Colonel. When he did, he carried two glasses. Handing one to Kamechek, he said, "Brandy."

Kamechek was leaning back on his pillows, hands folded behind his head. He was still chewing on the dead cigar stub. "What, no vodka for the Russian?"

"Your dossier says brandy. Is it wrong?"

The Russian sipped his brandy, obviously pleased with its taste. "So far, my only complaint is a sore arm from the inexpert sedation given me. And, of course, the foolishness of my being here at all. Perhaps I'll have more to complain about once your interrogation begins. I'll voice those in an official charge when I'm returned to my Embassy. This will put a blotch on your record, Matt. It'll also finish General Lawrence's career." Shaking his head, Kamechek added, "Such a waste of talent over so impetuous an action; it's a shame."

The Colonel rubbed the chewed up end of his cigar stub around the inside of the brandy glass, sopping up the last drops of liquid. "Are we about to begin or can I trouble you for another cigar?"

"Since you've chosen not to sign the request for asylum, I'm afraid you don't have time for another cigar, Yuri."

"Aha, it begins, eh? Well, go ahead, ask your questions."

"No questions, Yuri. Just one last opportunity to sign the paper before you fall asleep. Your brandy was drugged."

"Do what you will," he answered. "I have no intention of signing." With that, the Colonel's head fell forward in unconsciousness, the dead cigar stub falling from his mouth.

Cole removed the stub and threw it into an ashtray. He laid the Colonel's head back against the pillows, then left the room.

Some thirty hours later, Cole and Dr. Sullivan entered the bedroom and looked down at the inert form of the Russian. The Doctor immediately set about checking the man's vital signs. When he was satisfied that his patient's condition remained stable, he reached up and slowed the drip from the intravenous bottle hanging above the bed. "He'll be conscious in about twenty minutes. I'd better get him hooked up to the machine," he said.

When Yuri Kamechek opened his eyes, he was greeted by the sight of his own blood flowing through long plastic

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tubes. The pain he felt rapidly cleared the haze from his mind. As he examined his situation more closely, it appeared to him that his blood was flowing from his body into a small machine next to the bed. Another tube was returning his blood from the machine into his body. He looked from the Doctor, seated on one side of the bed, to Matt Cole, seated on the other side. "What is this?" he groaned, in obvious pain.

Cole replied, "I'm sorry about the discomfort, Yuri, but I want you clear-headed when I ask for your decision." Pointing toward the Doctor, he continued. "This is Dr. Sullivan. He performed the surgery. I can assure you that you came through it well and are out of danger for the time-being. You're getting the best care available, under the circumstances. Once you've made your decision, I'll see to it that you're hospitalized.

"The last time we spoke, I told you that it was my intention to make you a liability to your government. To accomplish this in the shortest possible time, I've had to have your kidneys removed. Your blood is now being cleansed by this dialysis machine. This machine, or one like it, will be your constant companion for the rest of your life. Without it, your life expectancy wouldn't be much more than three days."

Naked fear was blatantly written across the Colonel's face as he realized his situation. Cole explained further: "I think you know that you're no longer of any use to your government. Your dependence on this machine makes you far too vulnerable. It's doubtful that Moscow will allow you to live with the information you have in your head so readily available. I suggest you sign the paper and tell us what we want to know. We can offer you the proper care and protection necessary to make you comfortable for the rest of your life."

Kamechek was about to speak when Cole raised his hand, stopping him. "Take your time, Yuri. Don't make a hasty decision. Think about it. I'll be back soon and you can tell me then what you want to do. After you've made your decision, we'll increase the dosage of pain killer and make you more comfortable." Smiling, Cole patted the Russian reassuringly on the shoulder. "You'll be in a hospital, soon; don't worry. Whether you'll be in our custody or the Soviet's depends on you."

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Cole rose and walked to the door, then turned and looked back at the pale-faced Russian. "Dr. Sullivan will stay here with you. Just let him know when you're ready to see me."

Forty-five minutes later, Dr. Sullivan informed Cole that the Colonel was asking for him. Cole returned to the bedroom. Kamechek was no longer connected to the dialysis machine.

The Russian looked at his interrogator with pain-filled eyes. "So, Mr. Master Interrogator, this is how you do it," he said, forcing a semblance of a smile. He nodded toward the nightstand and, just above a whisper, said, "I've signed your paper. What do you want to know?"

Cole turned to Dr. Sullivan and nodded. The Doctor readjusted the flow from the intravenous bottle. Cole picked up the paper and looked at it. "You'll be more comfortable now, Yuri. The questions will come later. There's no hurry."

Cole left the room and walked to the telephone. He dialed General Lawrence's private number. The gruff anxious voice of the General answered immediately.

"Cole here, Sir. You may inform the Soviet Embassy that Colonel Yuri Kamechek has requested political asylum in our country. And, Sir, the next time you go shopping, pick out an impressive looking feather for your cap." ■

Did you know...

Benedict Arnold received approximately 6,000 pounds from the British to betray his country.

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Though America's most famous traitor never got half the amount he demanded, on reaching England his wife was paid a cash bonus and voted a pension of 500 pounds a year for life.

In the mortuary chapel at West Point, each general officer of the Continental Army is represented by a commemorative tablet. One differs from all the rest. It bears no name, only the title of Major General and the dates of Benedict Arnold's birth and death.

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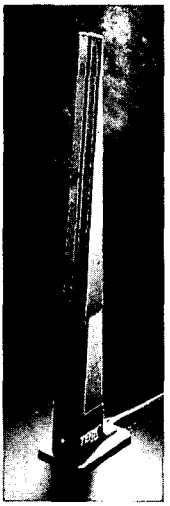

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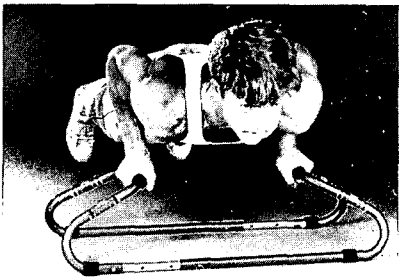

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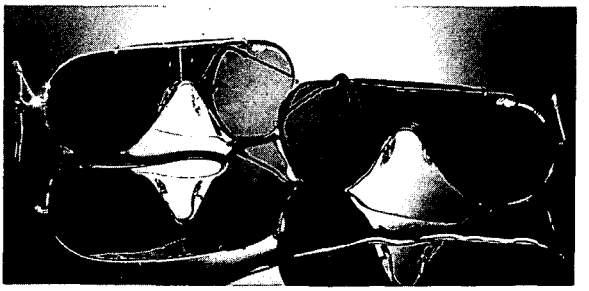

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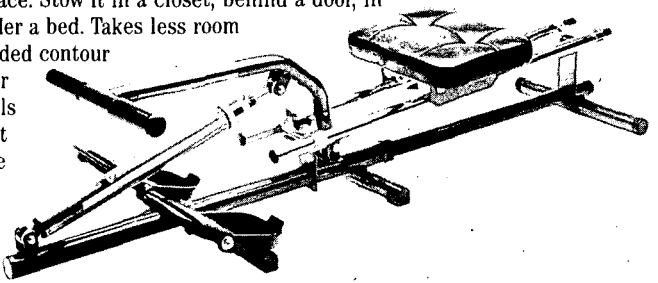
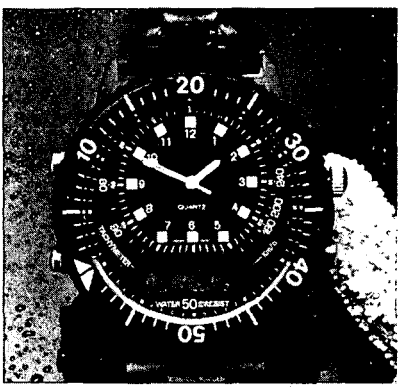


DIVER'S WATCH



The Diver's Watch, priced under $50, is rated waterproof to 5 atmospheres (over 150'). The movable bezel, case and band are all "black chrome" plated in a rugged matte finish. Two sunken faces provide fully independent digital and analog timekeeping, so you can set one face to home time and one to travel time. Date, day and month display; alarm; 1/100 second chronograph with lap timer; choice of hourly chime, 12 or 24-hour format. Precision Japanese movement. 1-yr. warranty. **$39.00** ($4.95) #A1490.

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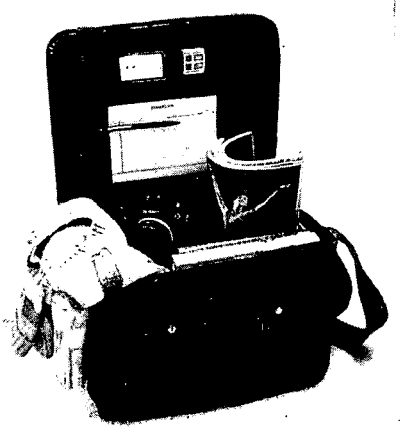

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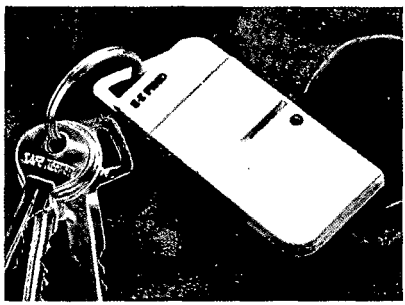

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The Spy Who Spoke Mynah

by Esther K. Schulz

Max pounded on the door of the barracks with both fists. He hollered at the top of his lungs: "General! General! Come quick. Gretchen gone again. Help me!"

Von Schell stuck his head out the door. "Ach, you big *Dummkopf.* Shut up! The General sleeps. He'll shoot you at dawn if you wake him up. You . . . "

"But Gretchen fly away," Max wailed. "In the woods. Alone. Maybe somebody shoot her, maybe. . ."

"Nobody's going to shoot anything. Not in this forest. You know that. So, go on now. Get out of here." Von Schell swore under his breath, then yelled, "Why can't you keep that curs-ed crow secure anyway?" He started to slam the door but Max pushed inside. "Please," he begged.

"Holle!" von Schell cursed. "How many times you've let her get away? Four? Five? A dozen? By this time you should know every corner of the forest and exactly where to find her. What is it—she got a crow friend out there?"

Max shrugged his shoulders, turned his head sideways, and glared at von Schell with the vacant stare that had become his "normal" attitude. *If only that man knew how many weeks I worked to achieve this idiotic stare!* and he wailed, "Oh, Gretchen."

Illustration by Aries

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Von Schell lost his temper. *"Ach, Gott in Himmel!* You and your damned crow. *Hinaus!* And for all I care, don't ever come back. Get out!"

"Yes, Sir."

Von Schell pushed Max out the door and slammed it with an explosive bang.

Then all hell broke loose. The General stormed into the kitchen end of the barracks. His blond hair stood on end, his pajamas were rumpled, his robe half open. He yelled: "I won't endure this clatter! What goes on here anyway?"

"That *Dummkopf* Max. He's let that crow get away again. He thinks she might get shot."

"Damn him. If I dared, *I'd* shoot that bird—but without her we'd get no work out of Max. He's a fine woodsman and he does keep this place clean." The General reached for the mug of coffee von Schell handed him. "Sometimes I'd like to shoot him, too. The donkey!" He gulped the coffee and continued, grumbling. "Why the Count sent such an oaf I can't imagine. He's downright stupid. Too stupid, fortunately to realize what we are doing."

"I'm not too sure, General. He acts strange, jabbering and cooing to that bird, but I don't trust him and I don't want him messing around in my kitchen."

Von Schell took the General's mug, refilled it and held it out, chuckling. "Remember the day he came, trudging up the lane carrying an axe and saw, and that crazy crow on his shoulder? I'll never forget it."

None of the men would ever forget; they had never witnessed such a wierd sight: a slouching figure of a man in filthy clothes, who looked a derelict, wearing a battered old felt hat with no crown—just thick yellowish hair sticking through the top, good but unmatched woodsman's boots on his feet, and carrying the axe and bucksaw. To top it off, a live crow perched on his shoulder, tethered to the buttonhole of his coat by a heavy string, maybe four feet long. As he approached the barracks, the men inside watched from the window. They could hear him talking to the crow but could not hear what he said.

"Watch your language, old girl," he whispered, well out of earshot of the men. *"If the woods surrounding the barracks are bugged, our days are numbered. You're too valuable to this assignment to be done in before we even get started, so confine your speech to those few German expressions you've learned for*

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"Only the Count and the General knew what was going on here. The men worked blindly, obeying orders. . ."

this operation. We don't know exactly what we're getting into. It may take a while to learn."

As the man and crow drew closer, the men heard clearly, *"Liebe* Gretchen. Not to fear. Nice men here. The Count says so. Be good, Gretchen." Then he rubbed his cheek against the feathers of the shiny black bird, who opened her yellow-tipped beak and sang out, *"Danke* Max." The words were clearly understandable. The fellow threw back his head and laughed, reached into his coat pocket, pulled something out and handed it to the black bird. Again came that raucous squawk and *"Danke* Max." The sharp beak grabbed the morsel and gulped it down whole.

The men inside watched, speechless. It had been months since they'd come into the forest, where they built the shack they called "the Barracks." They ate and slept in one long room. They saw no one but themselves—ten men, weary, haggard and edgy to the point of hating one another. They had dropped from the outside world to tabulate, in detail, experiments being conducted for Der Furher's plan for the final purification of the Aryan race. This spot had been selected because of its nearly complete isolation. No one knew its location except the Count and Baron Ochs, whose *schloss* provided food for the men. The Baron's estate manager brought produce once a week, along with any messages for the General from the High Command. Only the Count and the General knew what was going on here. The men worked blindly, obeying orders: copying formulae, tabulating experiments.

To see that poor excuse for a man approaching, with woodcutting equipment and a crow! Dared they laugh? First one chuckled, then another, then all burst into uncontrolled laughter.

"Wait!" commanded the General. "This may be a ruse. Be ready." The men stopped laughing instantly and took gun stations as had been pre-arranged, revelling in the action. Any kind of action.

"Just in case," the General said. "I think I heard him say 'the

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Count,' so maybe this is on the level, but it's strange the Count didn't notify me. I'll speak to this man."

The General opened the door as Max reached up to knock. The two surveyed each other, then Max raised his hand to the rim of his hat. It couldn't exactly pass for a salute. He spoke first. "The Count sent me."

"The Count? Count who?" asked the General. He looked into the bluest eyes he had ever seen, though they lacked any semblance of intelligent expression. The lips froze into a silly, lop-sided grin that stuck when they did not move in speech.

Idiot! thought the General.

"The Count. The Count! He say, 'you go cut wood for the General.' I'm here. Here with Gretchen." Max looked directly into the General's eyes.

He really looks stupid, thought the General.

Max drew from his pocket, a piece of paper containing a crude drawing of a route through the forest to avoid all known lanes and roads. He surrendered the diagram without comment. The General studied it, and noting in the lower left-hand corner the secret identification code agreed upon between himself and the Count, said to himself: *This is authentic. No doubt about it.*

So Max stayed. He chopped wood for the stoves, cleaned the barracks, made up the men's bunks. Whenever he neared the table around which they worked, if he stopped to look at them, they screamed at him: *"Hinaus!"* or *"So fort weg!"* He did K.P. for von Schell, as well.

He built a small lean-to for himself and Gretchen outside the kitchen end of the barracks. It was adequate until the nights began to get chilly. In October, the General ordered Max inside to sleep on a cot tucked into the corner of the kitchen.

Von Schell grumbled. "I need every inch of space in my kitchen, there isn't room for that cot. And I don't want that pesky bird in here. Besides, what do we know about the guy? He probably listens to everything we say. He could be a spy or something, General. Maybe. . ."

"A spy? That stupid oaf? Come, come, von Schell, you have a very suspicious mind. Just look at him. Practically oblivious to everything around him, except for that crazy crow he talks to all day long. However, we'll keep an eye on him if it will ease your suspicions."

Two days after Max moved inside, he was awakened early one morning by ear-splitting banging noises outside his end of the bar-

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racks. He jumped out of bed, yanked on his pants, threw his old coat about him and tucked Gretchen under his arm. He rushed out the door, the General storming out after him. The men followed, tumbling over each other to get out.

"What's going on here?" yelled the General. "Where's von Schell?"

With Max in the lead, they rounded the building to see von Schell swinging Max's axe with all his strength, smashing into the boards of the lean-to. The cracking of the axe against the wood was punctuated by loud curses and hollering. "I'll find it! It's here, somewhere, and by God, I'll find it. I'll kill that *Dummkopf* and his idiot crow."

As the walls began to fall in, Max released Gretchen and rushed toward von Schell. He grabbed the axe and pushed von Schell with such force that von Schell stumbled and fell against the building. Max swung the axe into the remaining siding and knocked the boards to the ground. The roof fell with a clatter and raised clouds of dust. Then he faced von Schell. His face broke into the silly twisted grin which so infuriated von Schell, who rushed toward Max with his hands outstretched like claws. Max stood firm, grinning.

"Lass das!" shouted the General.

Von Schell stopped in his tracks. He dropped his hands to his sides and glared at Max.

"Well, von Schell," the General scoffed, "are you satisfied? What were you hunting? Since you did not find what you expected, will you get about the business of preparing our breakfast?"

Max remained leaning on the axe handle, gazing at the demolished lean-to. He dared not show his anger, so the men saw only that silly grin spread across his face. From an overhanging branch, on which Gretchen perched, she let out her raucous squawk, then hollered, *"Lasz es sein!"*

Now Gretchen had gone again. Von Schell completely lost control of his temper and pushed Max out through the partially open doorway. Max slipped and fell against the door, instead, shoving it wide open. As it banged back against the wall, he stumbled toward his cot and grabbed Gretchen's dangling string. He dragged it behind him as he crawled across the floor toward the door. No one saw the tiny pellets he rolled across the floor. Max grabbed the edge of the door, swung it open, backed out, and slammed it shut behind him.

The men laughed at von Schell's fury. "I don't care what you

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fellows think, that *Dummkopf* is too close to us when anything is mentioned about the project. How do we know what goes on in that crazy head of his? Maybe he is playacting."

"You are very suspicious, von Schell. You have been all along," said the General.

Von Schell stormed about the room, grumbling, throwing his arms about. "That bird," he yelled. "How does it happen she disappears so often? By God! About every two weeks. *I* say. . . I say. . . it's. . . fishy."

The General squinted toward von Schell. He didn't see him clearly. "You are mak. . . ing. . . me sus. . . sus. . . pish. . . shus, too. . . von Schell."

Von Schell caught the edge of the table and slumped to his knees.

The General's eyes bulged; he leaned forward and squinted at the other men. They bent forward and, one by one, dropped their heads on their arms, now outstretched on the table.

"I say. . . gent'l. . . men, why is. . . ev'ry. . . one so. . . tired?" Then he screamed "MAX!" and slumped forward. The General's head banged on the table.

Outside, Max raced to the edge of the forest. Listening, he heard raucous cawing and Gretchen's *"Hier* Max. *Komm hier!"* Then she flew to Max's shoulder.

An officer, wearing the uniform of the Allied Forces, hurried forward. The two men shook hands warmly. "Mission accomplished?"

"Yes, Sir. They're all dead by this time." Gretchen fuzzled Max's hair. He scratched the bird's head. "Good old girl," he said, and the Colonel nodded his agreement. "What now?" he asked.

"We return to the barracks, smash the windows, and wait about ten minutes for the fumes to completely dissipate. Then we go in and pick up the charts and their experimental data. I know where everything is. But we should hurry, Sir."

"My jeep is around the bend," said the Colonel. "We'll drive back and finish the job."

As they came in sight of the jeep, Max jerked to a stop. "Colonel Courtland," he exclaimed in a hushed voice, "that jeep. That driver. We're trapped." The jeep bore the nazi insignia; the driver wore the Nazi black shirt. It was the same driver and rig that had brought produce to the barracks from the *Schloss* of Baron Ochs. Max grabbed Gretchen's beak to silence her. He crouched in the shrubs.

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Colonel Courtland laughed! "It's okay, Max. We're secure."

"But that driver. I've seen him many times. He. . ."

"Max, just how do you figure I made it here every two weeks for your reports?"

"I've thought about that many times, Colonel. I worried about you roaming around in Nazi territory."

"I can tell you, now," said the Colonel. "Baron Ochs is 'our man' here. It's through him you were given this assignment. His driver is also one of us. He says he dared not look at you when he delivered supplies lest he reveal himself."

Max blew a low whistle and relaxed his grip on the bird's beak. Gretchen squawked her protest at the violent handling. "Let's go, then," said Max, "and clean up the place, so we can get on with the next job."

"Your 'next' is an extended rest until we're sure you're not a marked man."

The Colonel shook his head as he looked first at Gretchen and then at Max. "The Department is amazed! It's taken you almost no time to ferret out the names of the butchers conducting those horrifying 'medical' experiments. Thanks to you, we now have a lengthy dossier on at least one—the man named Dr. Mengele.

"A truly brilliant piece of sleuthing, Max. Truly invaluable."

"Thank Gretchen, Colonel. She carried the messages. I didn't risk a thing, except the possibility of dropping out of character. I've never been good at dramatics."

Max grinned, thinking back. "Of course, I lived in deadly fear that one of the men might try to pick Gretchen up, only to discover the capsule grafted onto her leg or that the orange of her wings had been dyed black. If they had discovered she was a Mynah bird instead of a plain old crow. . ."

Gretchen squawked loudly: *"Guten Tag."*

Both men laughed. Max ruffled her feathers and scratched her head.

"One more thing, Max. Did you scatter all the fume pellets?"

"One left. For myself, just in case." Max handed over the tiny metal box. "What a relief to rid myself of that."

"When we return to the *Schloss,"* Courtland said, "you'll be properly outfitted. Tomorrow we take the underground route to the border and fly back to England. There you'll resume your own name. I am mighty proud to inform you, however, that you have been elevated in rank." He stretched forth his hand and gripped Max's in a firm clasp. "Congratulations, Colonel Hermann Fischer."

They climbed into the jeep and made their way to the barracks. ■

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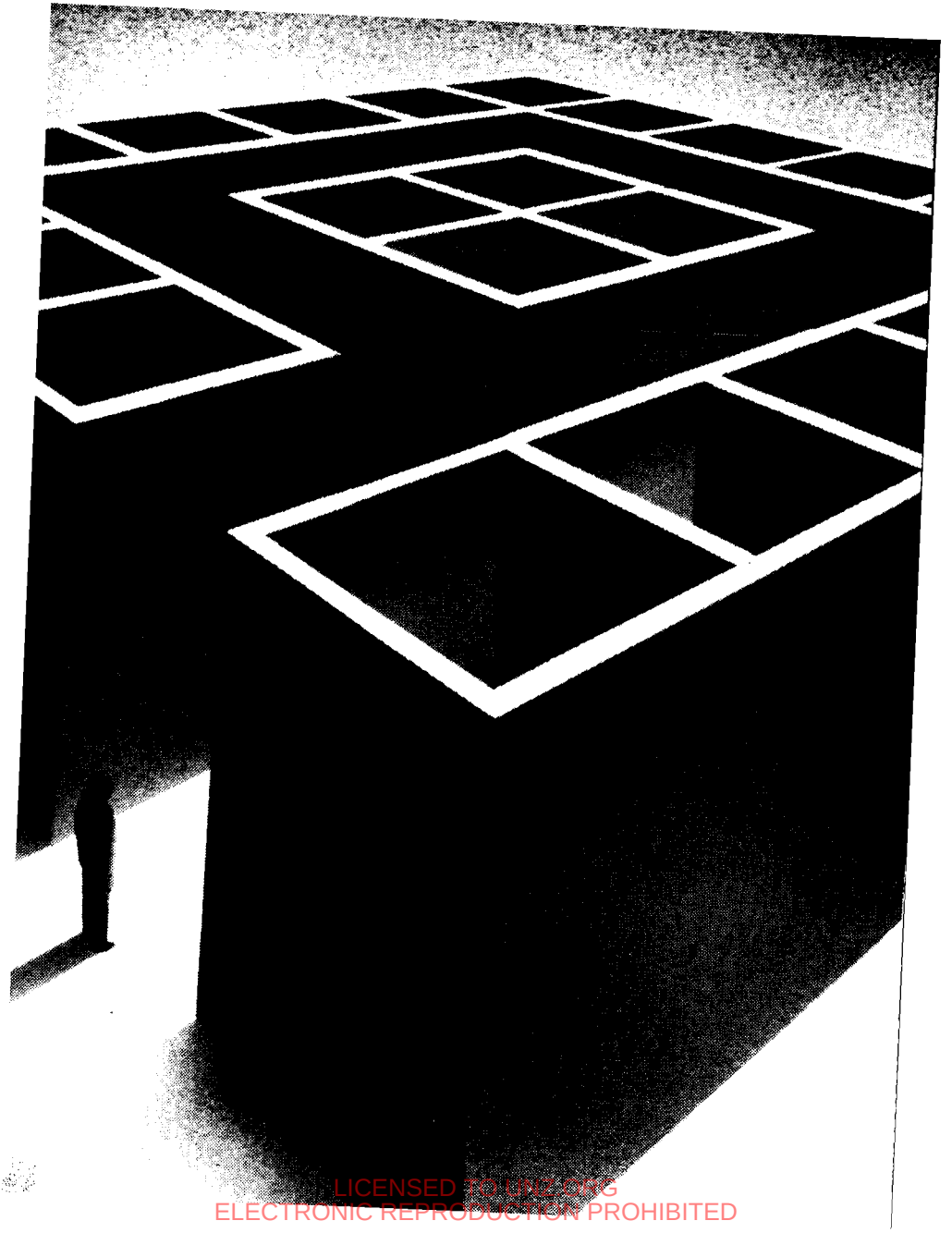

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Love Is Here To Stay

by Isak Romun

I got to the office very early that day. I had a good idea I thought could be worked up into a column or perhaps a feature with photos by Abe Slaughter. As happens with so many of my good ideas, this one began to fizzle and here I was, after foregoing a relaxed breakfast at the White House, our local ginmill, staring with hostility at my typewriter as if the story were locked up in it instead of in me.

Outside the cubicle I grandly called my office, *The Paulsburg Advance-Indicator's* nightside crew was finishing its shift, a low and steady hum the only clue that humans were afoot, or at any rate alive, inside the building.

My mind began to wander. I started singing to myself an Ira Gershwin intro written for one of his brother's songs. I remembered some of the words and the music of the introduction, but could get no further, couldn't even identify the song's title. The words kept rolling around in my head—

The more I read the papers,
The less I comprehend
The world and all its capers
And how it all will end.

I had just about given up on the song, and my typewriter (I somehow couldn't get my fingers onto the keyboard). I looked at the machine and, in my stupor, swore it stared back. It was just about to speak to me when I heard a sharp sound, repeated twice. Someone was knocking on one of my partitions.

I turned. In the open space billed as a doorway stood a stumpy figure, around five four,

Illustration by Bruce Baker

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late fifties or maybe pushing sixty. Although it was late spring, he wore an overcoat, a shabby thing almost reaching his ankles. It hung loosely on him and I had the impression that at some point in his life he had given up on filling it. He held a pie-wedge cap in one hand. The other hand had been raised to knock again on the wood of the partition. When I turned, he moved the hand to his head and nervously brushed hair already flat and forlorn. The hair surmounted a face that you'd have to concentrate on to remember, sunken in upon itself, with a grid of ugly intersecting trenches where others might have arresting wrinkles.

I waved him in, and he stepped into the office. Now he had both hands on his cap and it looked as if they were trying to tear it apart.

I said, "Can I help you?"

He said, "I always read your column, Mr. Monahan."

I said, "You got a copy, I'll autograph it."

He looked puzzled, then from the depths of those trenches exhumed a smile. "No, no," he said. "I mean, I read you every day. I know what you stand for."

I was immediately attentive. I'm always interested when people say they know something about me I don't know. I even get affable, hoping they'll tell me what it is.

"Sit down, sit down," I said roughly, suddenly the gracious host.

He shuffled into the office and plopped into a chair after arranging it so it was at an angle to my desk. I noticed this way he had a clear view of the office entrance and, beyond that, the newsroom in which a few ambitious souls moved about, making work motions.

"How can I help you, Sir? Mr. . . .ah?"

He thought a moment and said, "Smith." I must have looked skeptical. He added, "Nolan."

I asked, "Which is it?"

Another hesitation. He said, "Both."

"Mr. Smith Nolan?"

He thought again for a bit, then said, "No, Nolan Smith."

Now I ran this name over the tongue of my mind and concluded this was no Nolan Smith sitting by my desk. There was something about the name that paints a different picture in your mind, one that didn't correspond in any detail with the creature in my office. If he said, My name is Don Juan, or Douglas MacArthur, or Herbert Hoover, I couldn't have been more unbelieving.

"Well, Mr. Nolan—" I began.

"Smith," he corrected, quicker than I thought he would.

"Okay, Mr. Smith. Now what can I do for you?"

"I want to defect."

"Have any particular country in mind?"

"Yes, this one. The United States." He added, with emphasis, "Of America."

"What country are you a citizen of?"

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He seemed to slump in the chair. "This one. After the war, after I was released from the camp, I came over here. I put in my papers and was naturalized, oh, years ago." He waved his hand vaguely.

A thought struck me. "Don't tell me you're a spy? A mole?"

His face brightened for a moment the way struggling gray may momentarily relieve the darkness of an approaching storm. "Yes, that's it, I'm a spy." He dredged up another wan smile that fell off his face almost as soon as it got there. "I've been a spy ever since I've been here." His tone became conspiratorial. "They trained me and spirited me into that camp. I was sponsored by front people already here. They're all dead now."

"Well, Mr. Smith, I don't think, under the circumstances, being a citizen and all, you can defect. You are, of course, guilty of treason. Under certain circumstances that can be a capital offense. The Rosenbergs. Remember?"

"Well, you see, I've never done anything." He dropped his cap and raised both hands to me, palms up. "My hands are clean."

Actually, they weren't. They were cracked and calloused, and in the cracks you could see black lines of sanitized dirt, put there, I figured, by years of hard work.

I said, "Hold on. You're a spy, but have never done any spying?"

"It's easy to understand how that could happen. After the war, *they* saw great opportunities for filling this country with agents. I was one among hundreds, maybe thousands, infiltrated in. I was told to bide my time and wait for instructions. I was told they might be a long time in coming. They haven't come yet, over thirty years later."

"Got tired of waiting?"

"It's not that." He half smiled. "Something else. I've spent over half my life here. The Motherland is a dream. We were told to melt into and identify ourselves with the community and not 'keep up' with the old country. I obeyed. I work in a machine shop. I go to church. I take a vacation at the beach each summer. And each year, my investment of time and memory becomes greater here than it is there. Finally, I asked myself, 'What are you waiting for?' Then I asked myself another question, a frightening one. 'What if instructions come? What then?' I wouldn't know how to act, what to do. Even if I did, I couldn't. So I came to you."

"Because you read my column?"

"Yes."

"And know what I stand for?"

"Yes."

"And you want me to tell you what to do?"

"Yes."

I got up and walked to the window pierced into the single real wall of my office. I looked out. The *Advance-Indicator* building wasn't a big one, but I was high enough in it so that the street below and the cars and bodies

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moving in it seemed unreal and far away and slightly magical. I turned from the window and looked into the drooping eyes of my visitor. "Pick up your cap, Mr. Smith," I said, "and come with me. We're going to have breakfast and then go someplace. I think I know where you can get help."

"I'm surprised you're not milking this one for all it's worth, Monahan," George Fathlean said, coming back into his office. "But I've got to tell you it's not worth much."

After a White House breakfast, I had taken Nolan Smith across town to the white-columned Federal building. There, we went up the elevator to the seventh floor and down a long corridor to a set of gold-lettered, double doors.

I had delivered Smith to George Fathlean, with a few words of explanation, and then the little man was whisked off to a questioning room. I waited in Fathlean's office less than half an hour when the agent came back with his pronouncement on the worth of Smith's story.

"You mean he's not telling the truth?" I asked.

"Monahan, he could be telling the truth or he could be lying. In either case, so what?"

"So what? He's got something to tell maybe you can use."

Fathlean fell into the upholstered chair behind his desk and began studying his fingernails, which were tastefully pared and buffed pink, a white quarter moon at the bottom of each. I noticed that, even seated, he looked like the quintessential agent: cool, detached, and with no wrinkles in his pants.

"It's less than a maybe, Monahan," he said, "it's a negative."

"I don't follow that."

"Look, here's the scenario. Citizen walks in off the street, says he's a spy. But he's done no spying. No laws broken. We can't nab him for what he *thought* in the years between 1947 and now. Maybe he can tell us something, right? No, he can't, because he doesn't know anything. So what does he want of us?"

"He wants the protection of the United States government."

"He has that already—just like any other citizen."

I walked toward the door. "Where is he?"

Fathlean stood up but stayed behind the desk. His white shirt gleamed, the soft brown of his suit fell in easy, uncluttered folds about him. He smiled; his teeth were perfect, and clenched. He said through them, "Turn right, go past two doors on your left, open the third one and say, 'C'mon.'" He stretched and yawned. With class.

As I was closing the door, Fathlean called after me, "Try Immigration."

Why not? I was in the building.

I did a story once on Miles Greye and his office, because I was curious about just what

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he and his small crew did in the way of immigration work in Paulsburg. After all, our city is neither a seaport nor a border town; we're not overrun with defecting sailors or persistent wetbacks.

For the record, he wasn't the smart ass Fathlean was, but was about as much help—though he was stuffier about it.

"Well, we'll check, Mr. Monahan," Greye was saying, but Mr. . . . ah . . . Smith here" (and he nodded at Nolan Smith sitting miserably in one of the two chairs before the desk) hasn't done a single thing that would bring us into the picture. He entered the country legally, he says. Everything aboveboard. According to his account, he's lived a model life here in Paulsburg. There is nothing, nothing, that would, in the ordinary course of events, bring us into the picture. But, as I said, I can do a background." He looked at Smith. "Now is Nolan Smith the name under which you came into the United States?"

"No," I said.

"Yes," Smith said.

I looked at Smith, but he wouldn't look back at me. His eyes were fixed on his lap where his hands were locked in their love-hate relationship with his cap. Greye raised his eyebrows and looked quizzically at me.

"Stop the screwing around," I said. "Give the man your right name. The one you came over with, anyway."

"Nolan Smith," he muttered.

"He wants the protection of the United States government." "He has that already — just like any other citizen."

I looked at Greye. "Social security number?"

He shook his head. "I doubt if he has it on him and I have no power to force it out of him."

I shrugged my shoulders. Greye said, "As a matter of form, I'll check, but if everything's as he's said, well, my hands are tied."

"Thanks," I said, and Smith and I got out of there.

For about half an hour, we wandered around that building looking at the lettering on the doors: Health and Human Services, Internal Revenue, Interior, Veterans Administration, Transportation, and all the rest of the agencies packed into the building like cells in a termite hill. I was looking for State, but it wasn't there. We were on the stairwell going down to the first floor when Fathlean bumped into us.

"I'm glad I caught you, Monahan," he said, massaging my arm and even making a kind of ten-

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tative pluck at Smith's tatty overcoat. "There's someone in my office who can help. And he is *very* interested." Fathlean was almost arch in his effort to get his point across, which, I'm afraid, I completely missed. He was going through the damndest motions, which only later I realized were supposed to convey the images of a cloak and a dagger.

We followed Fathlean to his office. In there, we found a beefy figure standing in front of Fathlean's desk. He wore a rumpled whipcord suit and glared at the door we had just come through.

"What took so long, Fathlean?" he croaked in a drill sergeant's voice, then didn't wait for an answer. "This him?" he asked, nodding at Smith.

Fathlean nodded back.

Then the beefy one nodded at me. "Then who's he?"

Fathlean told him.

The beefy one pointed an index finger at me. "Smith stays. This guy goes. You, out!"

"No," Smith said.

The beefy one asked Smith who the hell he thought he was, telling a representative of the government what to do.

"I will not stay alone with you two gentlemen," Smith said with patient precision. "Mr. Monahan stays with me. If he goes, I go."

The beefy one asked him where he got the idea he had any choice in the matter.

Smith pointed with his cap at Fathlean. "He's spent a good part of this morning explaining to me my rights—as a citizen."

The beefy one glared at Fathlean, who elected to look charmingly sheepish. "Perhaps," Fathlean said, "I should tell them who you are."

"No names!" the beefy one croaked again. He turned to me. "You. Okay, you stay. But you keep the old yap zippered. Got that?"

"Stuff it," I said with a nonchalance I had difficulty keeping up.

Such a look of incredulous shock passed over the beefy one's face that I concluded what I said had been worthwhile, just for that. I sat down and said to Smith, "Sit down, Mr. Smith."

This left Fathlean and the beefy one standing. They scurried for seats, seeking to even things up. The beefy one beat Fathlean to the agent's own upholstered chair behind the desk. Fathlean satisfied himself by lolling negligently on a leather sofa under a window.

The beefy one bent forward over the desk, his elbows on its top. I took out my notebook and flipped it open, because I thought it would annoy him. If it did, he tried hard not to show it, and succeeded.

Surprisingly, Smith picked up on the talk. "Sir," he said, looking at the beefy one, "I was put here years ago as a spy. I haven't, as you might say, plied my trade. I want to escape the nightmare of waiting, the fear of a telephone call or

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a knock on my door or of being accosted unexpectedly on the street. I want to defect or, as Mr. Monahan has instructed me, turn myself in, put myself under the protection of the government. Which, I want to point out, I could not now act against in any case."

"No, no!" the beefy one exploded, spraying Fathlean's desk top with globules of spit. "That's not the way it works at all. Listen to me, Smith, you don't turn yourself in. You go back. You go back to your home and wait. You wait no matter how long it takes. And we'll wait with you. And when the contact comes, *no matter when,* you go along. We won't be more than a step away, taking it all down, learning all we can about these birds."

"That would be a return to fear. I only want peace."

"We all want peace," the beefy one said devoutly, but managed to convey the certainty that, uh huh, he really didn't. "But peace costs, my man. That's why I'm out here on the front line with all the other fine agency folk who want to make the world just a little bit safer."

"No!" Smith said.

"No?"

"No. I used to think of the world and how I could make it a better place. I thought so hard and so long about the world, all the time realizing it was my duty to do so, that I steadily used up any reservoirs of concern I had until inside me was an emptiness, a vacuum. I filled up this space with thoughts about myself, how I could save myself, salvage what's left of me in the time left to me. You are probably going to tell me I owe this country and the Free World a lot, and you are probably right. However, I don't intend to pay. It's that simple."

Smith got up then and with an unexpected dignity walked toward the door. I followed him. Behind us the beefy one was sputtering slogans and anthems. As I passed Fathlean, he was grinning, his mouth broad, his teeth apart so I could see his tongue. It was like a bell's, tolling away.

Decidedly not cool. But George Fathlean went up several notches in my book because of that grin.

There was still a good part of the morning left when we got outside the Federal Building. We walked slowly to my car. I noticed Smith looked up and down the street as we walked, trying to see the face of every passerby without looking him or her directly in the eye.

"Your name isn't really Nolan Smith, you know," I said.

"No, no, it's not. I just made that up this morning. In your office, as a matter of fact."

"I guessed that. Will you tell me your real name? I mean the name you've been living here under? And, yeah, your real name before that?"

"No, not until I have some

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assurances."

"I could take your wallet away from you and find out."

"You'll find the name Washington there. On a few dollar bills. I emptied my wallet of all identification when I started out to see you. Are the names so important?"

"I suppose not."

We had reached the car. As I fiddled with the door lock on his side, he surveyed the parking lot looking toward one end and then the other. I let him in, then went around to the driver's side. He reached over and unlocked the door for me. I got in. I started up the car, pulled out of the parking lot, and just drove with no destination in mind. In minutes, we were on the edge of the city moving down a paved road leading into the country. The houses were few here and set far back from the road. Soon the farms began to appear and we drove for miles flanked on either side by tall corn, luxuriant tobacco, low growing soybeans, occasionally a row of uproarious, wide-faced sunflowers.

"It's beautiful," he said.

"Yes," I answered, then said, "That was quite a speech you made back there."

He gave that some thought before answering. "I didn't make a speech, I made a statement." He paused, and then went on. "You know, there may be someone following us. When I first came over, I was told someone was assigned to watch me and, beyond him, there would be someone else. There would always be someone. Someone watching, someone following."

"Who do you watch?" I looked at the rearview mirror. We were alone on the road.

"No one. I am at the very bottom. I am below the last watcher. Is it a wonder I want to defect or whatever you care to call it? What will I do? Is there anything left?"

"I'm thinking." After a while, I said, "I could write an article. Get community support, the people to put pressure on their public servants. That kind of thing."

"Would that be effective?"

"It would help if we had some juice."

"Juice?"

"Clout. Influence. Power."

"Do you have a source of this?"

Ahead of us was a pull-off, one of those crescent-shaped graveled areas hanging on the side of the road like an ulcer. I pulled in and stopped the car. We sat quietly for minutes.

"Yes, I do," I said at last.

"You do what?"

"I know where the juice is."

I cranked the wheel around to the left as far as it would go. I pulled out into the road, made a U turn, and sped back to Paulsberg.

I always wrote favorably of the senator. As a matter of fact, he once told me I "delivered" Paulsburg and the surrounding counties to him. It wasn't true but it was nice to know that he appreciated what I did to the extent

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of fibbing about it. Fib or not, I could always go to his front door when he was in town, ring the bell, and get in. And most of the time see him.

And this is what I did that morning. With Smith in tow, I breezed past the formidable manservant who opened the door, and was received by the senator himself in his sitting room.

"Well, Oscar, another hour and you'd be in time for lunch," the senator boomed. He was tall, consciously elegant, and overpowering. The gray was in the right places and whether it was kept in those places by application of one thing or another didn't matter, because it was right.

He was dressed to meet the high or the low. He wore the black bow tie that was his trademark above an off-white shirt formed into a V by his buttoned gray suitcoat of fifty-five percent polyester, forty-five percent virgin wool. He was a man of high color; his hands, his face, and, I knew if we could see into the black shoes and gray socks, his feet were a glowing ruddiness that spoke at once of warmth and emotion and concern. And, yes, the good life, too. He was what we expected our politicians to be. You instinctively trusted him. And you'd vote for him.

Well—maybe you'd vote for him. The senator had been in the arena a long time, offering up one victim after another to the down-turned thumb of the public. But this year he had a real contender. It would be a fight.

I introduced Nolan Smith, and the senator grasped the little man's hand in the two of his as if this small, insignificant visitor had a couple of wards in his pocket. Then the senator asked, "Now, sir, how can I help you?"

And Smith began telling him.

Nolan Smith and I had spent the morning awash in disappointment. But with the senator, our hopes—mine, anyway—were high. Nonetheless, there was at the core of our optimism the niggling drop of doubt. We wouldn't have been surprised—we would have been disappointed but not surprised—if the senator had boomed at us a bit more and then, in the most gracious manner possible, told us we were out of our heads coming to him for help and had his manservant usher us politely but firmly from the house and onto the pavement outside.

But none of this happened.

Instead, halfway through Smith's recitation, the senator put his arm around the little man's shoulders, led him to a pair of chairs, sat him in one, hitched the other over close to his, where they sat in the near attitudes of penitent and confessor. I turned away and began examining the pictures on the walls.

They were not very interesting pictures; all portraits. I was glad when, out of the corner of my eye, I saw the senator rise. He looked down at Smith with that look

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which, at rallies, raised lumps in men's throats and tears in women's eyes. He came over to where I stood pretending concentration on a framed, dour-faced jurist with a marked resemblance to the senator, though without his facial mobility.

"He'd know what to do, Oscar," the senator said, nodding reverently at the portrait. "And I know just what he'd do and that's just what I'm going to do."

"And what's that, Senator?"

"Why, help the poor fellow, of course. I tell you, Oscar, the way he's been treated today is an outrage, an outrage."

"So, how do we go about helping him?"

"That's what we have to figure out. This is nothing small, Oscar. This is big and needs the attention of my entire staff. And the timing is not just right."

Before I could point out that a moment before he had declared he knew just what he'd do, or ask him about the timing, he turned quickly and walked to a desk in a corner of the room. The piece was a decorative affair, didn't look as if it was the sort of thing you used for heavy rounds of senatorial infighting. It was made of highly polished cherrywood, had long spindly legs that looked unsubstantial, a small flat surface at top upon which stood a wooden nutcracker in the form of a red-coated and shakoed soldier, a Chinese vase, and a small, painted statue of St. Florian. The cover of the desk was a rectangular piece of wood which, when pulled down, formed a suitable writing surface. The senator pulled this down revealing the interior of the desk. The piece was transformed. Inside were pigeonholes stuffed with papers. A stock of election posters and various office machines, including a phone with what seemed like a few dozen buttons, were on the narrow base surface below the pigeonholes. It was as if the senator released into the pleasant, relaxed environment of the room the seething business of politics.

The senator moved his hand toward the phone, but he didn't pick up the receiver. With care, he pushed a number of buttons. He had barely turned away from the desk when I heard a light knock on the double doors of the sitting room.

He said, "Come in!"

Rod Berman, Cliff Salter, and Hester Brunn walked in. Of the three, only Hester, his executive assistant, was a member of his official Washington staff and, I suppose, had been co-opted to assist or direct the other two, who were on the senator's campaign staff.

"Well," the senator smiled, greeting them, "guess what's fallen into our hands?"

Then he told them. As he talked, he would nod from time to time at Nolan Smith and one or more of the others would steal swift, furtive, and disinterested glances in Smith's direction.

The senator outlined quickly

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what he had in mind: exposure of a major espionage ring here in Paulsburg, perhaps throughout the entire state, the exposure designed to coincide with a point in the campaign when his opponent had promised to surface some damning facts concerning the senator's financial disclosure statement. He even roped me in, drew me into the circle, declaring that I, and only I, would be the siphon for releasing news of the exposure, as uncovered by the senator, to an admiring and gasping electorate. As I thus joined the group, I received the same noncommittal and indifferent stares from the people I was to work with as they had lavished on Smith.

Then the team got down to business—the business of planning to the least detail the coup, how the lid would be kept on it for a while, how a careful leak to the "press" (read *me*) would be made, and then, when the public was drooling for more, a full-blown announcement by the senator designed to blanket the front pages of the area papers and drive anything his opponent had to say back to the regional news supplement.

In the course of the conference, other workers were called in and, as each was brought into the picture, he or she looked at Smith with the same clinical disinterest as the first three. Soon the room was filled with bodies, tobacco smoke, and the heavy din of voices speaking at cross purposes over which only the steady, increasingly stronger hum of the straining air conditioner could be heard. People were breaking up into smaller groups to plot separate sub-strategies. At one point, a butcher chart was brought in on which was plotted, in impenetrable symbols, the calculus of re-election. I admit I was caught up in it. It was exciting; a slice of America in its intimacy, its pitch, and in the occasional appeal to high-mindedness intoned, it seemed on cue, by the senator. At one point, he mentioned Smith—not by name—and we all turned, myself included, to favor him with the same rote glance he had been receiving throughout the meeting.

Our eyes turned back then to the senator, and then, in a massive double take, once more toward the chair in which Smith was supposed to be sitting.

But he wasn't.

"Where is he?" Saltis asked.

"Probably had to go to the bathroom," Berman said.

"We'd better be sure," the senator advised, and rang for his manservant, who earlier had let us in. When he came in, the senator asked him, "Remember that little fellow Mr. Monahan here came in with earlier? Do you know where he is?"

The manservant replied, "Why he left, sir. The last I saw of him, he was going down the street toward the center of town."

There was a heavy silence after this news. The senator dismissed

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the manservant, then said to Hester Brunn, "We'll find him. Put out a description."

"But I don't know what he looks like," Hester said. "Do you, Rod?"

Rod Berman shook his head. "What about you, Cliff?"

Cliff Saltis shook his head. "No idea. You were with him longest, Senator. You talked to him. Can you describe him?"

"Of course. He was short. He had brown hair. His hands felt horny."

"We need more than that, Senator."

The senator looked at me. "Oscar?"

I was sitting at a card table brought in earlier by the planners. My hands were on the table, cupped into a kind of ovate shape, like a mirror. I looked at my hands now and said, "Your description was okay, Senator. Perfect."

I lifted myself to my feet and moved toward the double doors of the room on my way to the front door. I felt as if I had just gotten off a space ship.

I was out in the hallway when I heard the senator's voice. "I've forgotten his name, Oscar. At least give us that."

"Brett Donnegon!" I said across my shoulder, dredging up a name from the past with no relevance to the present.

I never saw "Nolan Smith" again. For all I know, he's still out there, wondering how much his watcher knows, or awaiting instructions he had no stomach to obey. Or maybe he's run, convinced that every man is on his own, that to think otherwise is to invite indifference or exploitation.

Not exactly one of your class A, upbeat American endings. One thing though: Sometime during my morning with Smith, I recalled the title of that Gershwin song that had been occupying my thoughts just before the little spy came into my office. It's "Love Is Here To Stay." And if you find that sentiment credible, I've got a large bridge I want to sell you. ■

Did you know...

That Charles II of England paid for his mistresses by milking the funds of the Secret Service?

He balanced the books somewhat by letting the damsels, when redundant, set up bawdy houses in which they performed excellent service to the State as informers for the infant espionage service.

In those days, spies were recruited principally from ambassadors to the court. Bribery and corruption were prevalent, as were visits to the bawdy houses, the view being taken no doubt that sauce for the King was sauce for the courtiers, too.

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The editors of ***Espionage Magazine*** *are pleased to announce their*

Second Annual SHORT-STORY CONTEST

for full-time and part-time students at American Colleges and Universities.

1st Prize:
$200 and publication in *Espionage*

2nd Prize:
$100 and publication in *Espionage*

3rd Prize:
$50 and publication in *Espionage*

Rules:

1. All entrants must be currently enrolled as full- or part-time students at an American college or university in the U.S. or abroad.
2. All entries must be original and previously unpublished, and must deal with the world of national or international espionage. (Students are advised to familiarize themselves with the magazine before writing a story for this contest. Single issues are available at many newsstands, or a one-year subscription may be ordered for a special student rate of $12.00 from *Espionage*, P.O. Box # 1184, Teaneck, N.J. 07666. Include the name of your college or university on your order.)
3. Submissions must be typed and double-spaced, and may not exceed a length of 4,000 words. The entrant's full name and mailing address *must* appear on the first page of the manuscript, along with the name of the college or university the entrant attends.
4. Submissions should be addressed to *Espionage Contest*, P.O. Box # 1184, Teaneck, NJ 07666, and must be postmarked no later than December 31, 1986 to receive consideration.
5. Winners will be notified by mail on or before June 1, 1987. The winning stories will be published during 1987. All rights to winning stories will be the property of the publisher.
6. Submissions will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

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The Lord Helps Those Who Help Themselves

by Phillip Ballard

It was the summer of 1982. I was beginning my third year as missionary pastor of an English language Baptist church in the Paris suburb of Reuil-Malmaison. The difficult transition from being a seminary student in Texas to pastoring a cosmopolitan congregation on the western edge of Paris was over; my wife Karen and I finally felt at home in France. Karen was pregnant with our first child, and the arrival of a baby in the fall made the future look especially bright.

The temperatures had been mild that summer until mid-July, and on that particular Sunday morning, it was uncomfortably warm. Karen and I arrived early at the small, red brick building where the Immanuel Baptist Church met. My name, Ted Connell, was on the sign out front along with the schedule of weekly services.

We opened the windows to cool off the building, which had been closed up since the midweek Bible study on Wednesday. Karen went into the fellowship hall to put on a pot of coffee while I prepared the sanctuary for the 10:00 a.m. Sunday School which would precede the worship service. Hearing a noise at the rear entrance of the chapel, I looked up and saw two men standing there dressed in three-piece suits. One face I knew; the other I didn't.

"Brother Ted, how are you?" The man who spoke was Gregory Oliver, Director of European Baptist Missions and my boss for the last two years. Normally, he wore an engaging smile; today he looked reserved and ill-at-ease. He forced a smile as we shook hands.

"Ted, I brought an acquaintance of mine to meet you. This is Dale Schuster."

Schuster looked small standing next to Greg Oliver, who was well over six feet tall and weighed about two hundred.

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However, Schuster's handshake was strong. He spoke softly in a tone of confidentiality and urgency.

"Pastor Connell, I asked Mr. Oliver to introduce us because I need to share some confidences with you, and we need to be able to trust each other."

"If you need spiritual counseling, Brother Oliver is better qualified to. . ."

"No, Pastor Connell, it's not that. I work for the U.S. government and with various intelligence agencies in Western Europe. We gather sensitive information that enhances the national security, and sometimes we ask people like yourself to perform small tasks for us."

I was beginning to feel as uncomfortable as Greg looked, but I forced a laugh and said, "You mean you're a spy?"

Schuster smiled and showed two rows of white, even teeth. "Well, Pastor, I wouldn't put it that way." Here Schuster paused. The first of my Sunday School students were arriving. We exchanged greetings, and I directed them back to the fellowship hall for coffee and pastry. Schuster continued. "We shouldn't talk here. Do you know the Luxembourg Gardens in the Latin Quarter?"

"Yes, my wife and I have lunch there sometimes. She's studying French at the Sorbonne."

"Can you meet me at the concession stand near the puppet theatre at 3:00 p.m. this afternoon? We can talk there in privacy."

I was inclined to say no, but Greg saw me hesitate and nodded assent.

"Ted, I know this is not in the missionary's handbook, but please meet Mr. Schuster and hear him out. I don't know what it's all about myself, but I got a phone call late last night from an old schoolmate of mine. He's with the State Department now, and he asked me to help set this up. He made it sound really important. I wouldn't have recommended you if I didn't think you could land on your feet."

Somewhere inside me a caution light was flashing but I agreed to meet Schuster that afternoon as a favor to Greg Oliver. Before they left, Schuster asked me to keep all of this absolutely confidential.

Karen had seen Brother Oliver and his companion leaving and she wanted to know why Greg had not bothered to say hello and who his friend was and what they wanted. To honor Schuster's request, I told her as little as possible, which was easy since I didn't know much either. When I told her I had to go into the city that afternoon for a meeting, she looked worried, but she didn't press me for details.

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I caught a cab at 2:15 p.m. to the Pont de Neuilly Metro Station, bought a carnet, and took the subway to Chatelet. There I changed trains and headed for the Luxembourg Gardens. The hot July sun hit me hard when I exited the subway tunnel, and the beautiful trees of the park—my destination—beckoned me to their cool shade. I crossed the Boul St-Mich and entered the park. I was a few minutes early so I bought some ice cream at the concession stand where I was to meet Schuster and took a seat on a nearby bench.

At 3:05 p.m., Mr. Schuster strolled up casually and sat down beside me at a discreet distance. He paid no attention to me but put on a pair of bifocals, unfolded a copy of *Le Monde*, and pretended to read.

"Don't look at me while we talk, Pastor Connell. I may have been followed, and I think it best that no one sees us talking." Schuster spoke in low tones without looking at me. "There's been a security leak, recently, and the identity of all our mid-level agents in Western Europe has been compromised. Two of them have been killed and we had to reassign the others."

I could feel my face redden and my pulse race as Schuster made these bizarre comments. "Mr. Schuster, I don't know what you're talking about, and I don't want . . ."

"Hear me out, Pastor, then you can decide whether or not you'll help us. Okay?"

I glanced over at him and saw that he was at ease and apparently oblivious to anyone sitting beside him. I got up and took the plastic ice cream dish and spoon to the trash can near the concession stand. My legs were trembling and I tried to get control of myself. I returned to my seat and pretended to read the New Testament that I always carried in my shirt pocket.

"Go ahead. I'm listening," I finally said.

"Until we get new people in place, the work has to go on with whoever's available. Mr. Oliver tells me there's an evangelism conference in Bern next week. We've arranged for you to attend. Ministers from all over Western Europe will be there. One of them, a pastor from Vienna named Koerber, will contact you and tell you where to exchange the packages . . ."

"What packages?"

"For the last two months, we've been buying military information from several high-level sources behind the Iron Curtain. They've been funneling the documents to us on microfilm through connections that we have in Czechoslovakia."

"You said something about

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an exchange. What would I be taking into Switzerland to give to Koerber?"

"Tomorrow morning, a package will be delivered to your house. It will contain a Swiss-made clock. Koerber will know what to do with it."

"I don't like it. What if I'm searched by customs officials?"

"They won't bother a clergyman on the way to an evangelism conference. Believe me, Pastor, you have the perfect cover. We don't anticipate any trouble at all."

"That's lovely. I guess your two dead agents didn't anticipate any trouble, either." It felt good to be sarcastic. Ministers don't often have the luxury.

This time, Schuster looked straight at me. "Believe me, we wouldn't deliberately put you into a dangerous situation. Most of the risks will have already been taken when you arrive in Bern. If something's gone wrong at that point, you will hear from Koerber."

"How would we recognize each other?"

"Koerber will find you. He has your picture from the EBM Directory. Besides, you'll all be wearing name tags, and there are only about 300 pre-registrants."

"Is he a professional agent?"

"No, he's like you. This is the first work he's done for us."

A soccer ball rolled up to my feet from a group of children playing nearby. I pitched it back to the one nearest me, a black-haired boy of about twelve. *"Merci, Monsieur!"* he called to me. I managed a sick smile and waved.

"Well? Can you help us? We'll pay all of your expenses to the conference plus a nice stipend. In return, you simply deliver a small package and return with another. You'll be helping the Free World, and we can get the books balanced." He folded the newspaper and pretended to watch the passers-by.

"What if I say no?"

"Then I have to find someone else. Or risk the life of another agent. . .which I prefer not to do. By the way, opening the package might damage the contents. Besides, it would be safer if you don't know the contents of either box." He pulled an envelope from his inside coat pocket and put it inside the newspaper.

"If you can help us, then take this copy of *Le Monde* when you leave. It contains your plane ticket and 10,000 Francs. Whatever is left from your trip to Bern is yours to keep. I can be reached through Greg Oliver if you have a problem or a question."

"I need more time to think about this."

"We have to know now. We're running out of time. These things can't be set up over-

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night."

Without really knowing why, I picked up the newspaper and walked away. I had decided to do the bidding of Mr. Schuster. It wasn't patriotism, although I love my country. I doubt if the CIA and I would agree on what's good for the country anyway. And it wasn't the money, although an extra $1700 would really help Karen and me, especially with the baby on the way. I think, as much as anything, it was the look on Greg Oliver's face when he told me I should do this. His expression said, *This isn't good but there are worse things. We do what we can.*

I didn't look back or stop until I had a seat on the subway. In the newspaper, I found the envelope containing the round-trip plane ticket, the money in 500 Franc notes, and a program for the evangelism conference. It would begin Tuesday evening at the Bellevue Hotel in Bern. I would leave Orly Airport at 10:15 a.m. and arrive in Bern at 1:05 p.m.

Karen was happy for me that I was being given an all-expense-paid trip to Switzerland for the conference and relished spending a few days with a girlfriend in the Latin Quarter during my absence. Of course, I didn't tell her that my trip was compliments of the CIA, and that I'd be carrying secret information, or whatever. She probably wouldn't have believed me anyway.

Just as Schuster had said, a delivery man appeared at my door the next morning with a brown paper package about the size of a large shoe box. Fortunately, Karen was at the market and I didn't have to explain the box. It was rather heavy, and I handled it carefully. I didn't quite know what to do with it until my departure so I decided to just lock it in my suitcase and lock the suitcase in the closet.

My flight to Bern was uneventful but my whole attitude had changed dramatically since I had agreed to play errand boy for Schuster. My usual openness with people, including strangers, which had been such a plus in my missionary work, had changed. The mysterious box in my suitcase, and my knowledge that I was helping the CIA, made me view every stranger as a possible threat. Since two agents had already been killed, I didn't feel this was mere paranoia.

My fears subsided somewhat when my cabbie drove me into the lovely city of Bern, and to the Hotel Bellevue, appropriately named due to its position on the banks of the Aare River, facing the breath-taking Swiss Alps. I checked in the hotel and, within minutes, was enjoying the view from my balcony.

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"They drugged me and locked me in my room...Have... have they gotten to you yet?"

Fearing burglars, I took the box to the hotel vault until I made contact with Koerber, then upon returning to my room, I lay down for a nap, falling asleep almost immediately. As I slept, an awful nightmare shaped itself in my subconscious. It was the last session of the conference and I still had failed to find Koerber. The meeting was in a giant, dimly-lit hall and was filled with thousands of people. I ran frantically from person to person, looking at name tags, calling Koerber's name, but to no avail. Then I saw a tall man wearing a white clerical collar.

"Pastor Koerber?" I asked, and my voice seemed to echo through the great hall.

He turned toward me and I saw that he had no face! I tried to scream, but nothing came out. I tried to move but couldn't budge a muscle. Then the anonymous figure raised his right hand and pointed a revolver at me. I stood helplessly, waiting to die; the black eye of the gun looking at me dispassionately.

I wakened to find that I was lying on my side with the circulation in my left arm nearly cut off. I rolled over, onto my back, to let the blood return to my arm, and noticed by my travel clock that it was well after five. I had lain down for a nap but had slept about three hours. My sleeplessness the night before had caught up with me.

By the time I showered and changed clothes, I had just enough time to eat a light meal, in the less formal and less expensive of the hotel's two restaurants, before the conference started.

The hotel's ornate conference room reminded me of the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles—all light and sparkle; nothing like the dark cavern in my nightmare. At one end of the room, a dais had been erected and decorated with fresh flowers. Above it hung a banner proclaiming the theme of the conference, in English: "Christ for the Whole World—Strategies for Evangelism." I stood at the refreshments table at the back of the hall, sipping coffee and looking for Ernst Koerber. Rather, letting him look for me since he had the advantage of having seen my picture.

The conference started, ten minutes late, without my having made contact. As the first

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speaker was introduced, I went to the registration desk outside the main entrance of the hall and asked the young man there if Pastor Ernst Koerber had arrived. Muttering the name under his breath, he checked through a file and reported that Koerber was pre-registered for the conference but had not signed in yet or picked up his name tag.

I asked if he had already checked into the hotel but was told I'd have to see the room clerk in the hotel lobby. The man on duty there reported that Koerber had checked in that morning and was in Room 306. It occurred to me that Koerber was probably in the conference hall but had neglected to sign in. If he was as nervous about this whole thing as I was, he might well have forgotten the formality. I decided to return to the conference hall and let Koerber find me during the intermission.

At 8:15, we were dismissed for a fifteen minute break. As I chatted with an old acquaintance from the Baptist mission in Amsterdam, I noticed a middle-aged man looking at me. He put on a pair of glasses and examined my name tag, and I knew this must be Koerber. He caught my eye and smiled, sticking out a sweaty hand for me to shake.

"Pastor Connell?"

"Yes, I'm Ted Connell."

"I'm Ernst Koerber. We have a mutual friend in Paris, I believe." He spoke in English with a thick accent.

I introduced him to the Dutch missionary who chatted for a few minutes and then excused himself when he spotted an old friend. As Koerber guided me to a deserted corner in the crowded room, I took a good look at him. His black hair had begun to gray at the temples, he had Bela Lugosi eyes and nose, and a weak chin partly hidden by a near-black goatee tinged with gray.

"Well, sir, Pastor Connell, I believe you have something for me, don't you?" He smiled ingratiatingly and toyed with the name tag that he now wore on his left lapel.

"Yes, Pastor Koerber. It's in the hotel vault and I'll be glad to turn it over to you. It makes me nervous."

"If you don't mind, I'd like to go ahead and get it."

"Sure. We still have a few minutes before the second half of the program begins."

As we walked through the hotel lobby to the office area, I heard my name called over the public address system. I excused myself from Koerber and went to the front desk, where I was told that there was a phone call for me. I took the call in one of the booths nearby and wondered if Karen had become suddenly ill.

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The deep voice on the other end of the line was obviously not Karen's, and obviously full of fear.

"Ted Connell? This is Ernst Koerber. Dale Schuster asked me to contact you, but I've been detained. This morning, two men were waiting for me when I checked into the hotel. They drugged me and locked me in my room. Late this afternoon, I regained consciousness and attracted some help by banging on the door. Have . . . have they gotten to you yet?"

This message so utterly surprised me that I didn't answer at first. I could see Koerber #1 nervously waiting for me outside the manager's office, smoking a cigarette and checking his wrist-watch every ten seconds. Koerber #2 was trying to get an answer out of me on the telephone, and I didn't know who was my real contact and who was working for the other side. Finally, I thought of a litmus test.

"Pastor Koerber—if that's who you are—I have another Ernst Koerber waiting for me to get the package out of the hotel vault. If you're who you say you are, you should be able to answer some questions."

"Whatever you say, but don't give the package to that *imposter*!" Koerber #2 seemed indignant that someone else would use his name.

"Can you quote our Lord's Great Commission for me . . . from the Gospel of Matthew?"

"Of course I can, Connell. I've preached enough sermons from it to say it backwards." He paused and cleared his throat. "I'm sorry. This whole experience has been very disconcerting for me. I didn't mean to be curt with you. Uh, the Great Commission. Yes. Jesus gave it to his disciples before his ascension. In Matthew 28: 19-20, he said, 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you.'"

I was relieved to hear the real Ernst Koerber quoting the Bible. I doubted that a KGB operative would be able to. As Koerber quoted the Great Commission, I noticed that a short, thin, young man had joined the imposter to tell him something excitedly. He reminded me of John Dean, the Nixon aide who spilled the beans during the Watergate scandal. Judging from Koerber #1's gestures and facial expressions, he was very angry with the younger man, like Nixon must have been with Dean. Now the imposter—the Bela Lugosi look-alike—was staring at me, probably wondering who might have called me. I turned away so he couldn't read my face or lips.

"Pastor Koerber, another

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question. Can you describe the two men who drugged you this morning?"

Koerber proceeded to describe, in detail, the two men who were waiting for me in the hotel lobby. My mind raced over as many options as I could brainstorm and pray for. It was obvious I would have to get the package out of the vault and get past the two enemy agents if I were to accomplish my mission. But how to avoid their clutches? I was sure their bag of tricks included more than just drugs. I thought of the two dead American agents and wondered how they died.

After a moment's pause, I spoke to the frightened man on the other end of the line. "Koerber, if you'll tell me where you are, I'll meet you later this evening." I fumbled for a pen and paper to write down the address.

"I'm at Stadelman's Antique Clock Shop, at 32 Kesslergasse. I was told to come here if anything went wrong. Come to the side entrance, and make sure you're not followed."

"Okay. I should be there between 9:00 and 10:00."

After Koerber hung up, I kept the receiver to my ear long enough to think of a plan. I jotted two notes on paper from my notepad and fished a Swiss bank note from my billfold. Then I prayed that famous old prayer, "Lord, if you'll get me out of this mess, I'll be much more careful in the future."

Leaving the phone booth, I walked past the front desk and left the notes and the money in front of a pretty blonde at the switchboard. Then I strode as confidently over to Bela Lugosi as I could, hoping he would not see that I knew his secret. The guy who resembled John Dean had taken a seat on a couch nearby with his face behind a magazine.

"Sorry for the delay, Pastor Koerber. My wife called from Paris. A friend of ours was in an auto accident, and she's going to spend the night at the hospital with her. She wanted me to have the phone number and to know the situation."

"Is your wife's friend badly injured?" Bela feigned concern.

"Karen thinks she'll be okay. The doctors seem optimistic." I had forgotten how well I can lie.

"Shall we retrieve the package from the vault?"

I nodded and we went to the manager's office. I handed the clerk my receipt and he went into the back. Then, over the public address system, came the voice of the young woman at the switchboard, "Ernst Koerber, please report to the front desk. Ernst Koerber, please report to the front desk."

Bela looked puzzled when he heard Koerber being paged; but to keep up the charade, he excused himself, assuring me

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he'd be right back. The clerk returned with the package and I quickly signed the record book. Peeking out of the door from the office area, I spotted Bela in one of the telephone booths dialing a number. My note—"Connell is a decoy. We've been tricked. Call in for instructions."—had worked. Hopefully, this would buy me enough time to get out.

John Dean had disappeared from the lobby. Apparently, he had discovered the real Koerber missing from his room, had reported the disappearance to his comrade, and left to look for their former prisoner. I slipped through the lobby, my heart pounding in my chest, exited the hotel from the front entrance, and hailed one of the taxis parked at the curb.

I had so psyched myself up for the performance in the lobby back there that, when I was no longer in immediate danger, I slumped into the backseat of the taxi like a coronary victim. In the ten minutes it took to drive to the clock shop, I tried to recover my wits.

The streets were still rather busy in this restaurant and theatre district. It would be hard to know if I'd been followed, but I took as many precautions as I could think of. Feeling the taxi slowing down, I asked the driver to let me out two blocks past the address. He looked rather strangely at me in the rearview mirror, but he did as I requested, pointing out the shop as we drove by.

I left the cab in front of a restaurant and pretended to study the menu posted in the window. Then I casually looked around. Noticing nothing unusual, I walked south toward the antique shop. I passed by and walked another block before doubling back on the next street over. The package seemed to be getting heavier and heavier.

Adjacent to the shop was an alley, and I approached the shop through the alley from the other side of the block. Above the alley entrance was a small sign that included the name of the shop and an arrow pointing to the street entrance, entreating customers to "Use the front door." It was hard not to beat on that door and scream to be admitted. I felt very vulnerable standing in that alley.

The shades were drawn on this rear portion of the shop and a light shone from the windows upstairs. The shop was closed but, at my knock, the light downstairs went on and an elderly woman opened the small security hatch in the middle of the door to peer out and ask me my business. I told her my name and that I had a package for Ernst Koerber, and she immediately admitted me. She led me up a narrow flight

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of stairs to a cozy sitting room where Koerber was having coffee.

He stood when we entered, and he and I exchanged hearty greetings as if we had known each other a long time. Koerber was a man in his mid-fifties, about five-feet-six, rather stocky, with handsome features and brown wavy hair. He was dressed in a tweed jacket and dark trousers, a white shirt, and a brown, woolen tie.

I liked him right away. There was an air of honesty and goodness about him that made me feel more at ease than I had been since my first encounter with Schuster two days ago.

Koerber then introduced me to the woman who had let me in. Frau Stadelman owned and operated the store, where she and her husband had bought and sold antique clocks for many years. Herr Stadelman had died several years earlier and she had continued offering the unusual service she and her husband had instituted after World War II. They offered their shop and home as a safe house for Western intelligence agents. It was one of several homes in Bern that were used intermittently when the headquarters were no longer safe or were being moved.

Frau Stadelman offered me a cup of coffee and I gladly accepted it, seating myself across from Koerber. Then she excused herself and disappeared into an adjoining room, telling us to make ourselves at home.

"I decided to have a look in the box. If I'm risking my life, I wanted to know what's inside."

"Pastor Connell, I was told this is your first errand."

"Yes, and it's also the last. Schuster made this trip to Bern sound like a vacation with pay, but I don't think he counted on the other side identifying us so easily."

"Apparently the security leak is closer to the top than they thought." Koerber was pouring himself another cup of coffee. "I have to tell you something. I checked out the package they gave me to deliver to you."

"But I thought those two men got the package when they drugged you. Did you leave it in the hotel vault?"

"No, they don't have it. I put it in an airport locker as soon as I arrived this morning. Then I hid the key in my hotel room. When I woke up late this afternoon, I went back to the airport and picked it up. Then it occurred to me that you were in

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trouble, too, so I came here and called you. Anyway, I decided to have a look in the box. If I'm risking my life for it, I wanted to know what's inside."

From behind the large chair in which he was sitting, he pulled out a pasteboard box about the size of mine. He set it on the low table in front of me and opened it. Inside was a Swiss-made clock, popular with tourists. Pulling it out of the box, he laid it on its face and prized the back off with a letter opener. Inside were six rolls of film and an envelope.

"This is what bothers me." Koerber handed the envelope to me.

What looked like two personnel cards were inside. Each had a black and white photograph attached with biographical and personal data about the men pictured. Both men were educated in Soviet bloc countries. One of them lived in London and the other in Paris. One was listed as an importer/exporter, the other ran an art gallery. The cards outlined personal habits, also, such as favorite restaurants, hobbies, etc.

I studied the cards for a few minutes and then Koerber asked me what I thought. Something Schuster had said came back to me as I looked at the two photos.

"Pastor Koerber, when Mr. Schuster explained all of this to me, he said something about 'balancing the books.' At the time, I didn't think much about it, but now. . .do you think he was referring to the American agents who were killed?"

"Killed? He didn't tell me about that." Koerber was visibly shaken. I tried to recount for him everything Schuster had said in our meeting in the park.

"Pastor Connell, do you think these two men are Soviet agents who have been marked for death in retaliation?"

"It sure looks that way, and we're delivering them to the executioner." I felt betrayed, somehow, and soiled by my participation in this. Schuster had made this errand sound so antiseptic.

I reached down and picked up the package that had been entrusted to me and that I had almost given to an imposter. With the letter opener, I cut the tape that bound it. I worked carefully, as if I were dismantling a bomb. And Koerber watched like an assistant surgeon, hoping it wasn't cancer but fearing the worst. The pasteboard yielded easily enough to reveal a clock just like the one in Koerber's box. I pulled it out but it was too heavy to be just a clock made of wood, metal, and glass. The back panel was fastened with four small screws. My penknife doubled as a screwdriver and soon we were looking at six metal plates wrapped carefully in a velvet-like fabric.

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"My God!" Somebody's being set up to print Russian money! These are steel printing plates! See, these two can be used to print a five ruble note." Koerber held two of the plates up to the light.

I examined one engraved for a twenty ruble note. I knew Paris was the home of many great artists but I didn't know there were any of the counterfeiting variety working there. Someone had done an excellent job.

"Why would the CIA want to smuggle these plates into the Soviet Union?" I asked.

"I suppose it would be a good way to subvert their economy if you look at it from the standpoint of the CIA. Anything bad for the U.S.S.R. is good for the U.S."

"And what would have happened to me if Interpol caught me with these plates?" I was getting as angry as I had ever been.

Koerber shook his head and answered readily. "You'd be rotting in prison for twenty years, and Mr. Schuster wouldn't even admit knowing you."

The creaking of the hardwood floors in the next room, and the shuffling of Frau Stadelman's house slippers, made us automatically conceal the contents of the boxes. A moment later, the old woman opened the sitting room door.

"Gentlemen, your rooms are ready."

"Thank you, Frau Stadelman," Koerber said, rising. "We really appreciate your hospitality."

"It's a small service compared to what you men are doing. There are some apple tarts on the kitchen table if either of you wants a snack before you go to bed. I'll have breakfast ready at 7:00. If you need anything, you'll have to pound on my door. I don't hear as well as I used to, and I'm a sound sleeper anyway. Goodnight."

We wished her a good night and sat back down to try to plan a course of action. Personally, I wanted to fly back to Paris and forget this whole horrible episode—but I didn't know how to get either the American or the Russian agents off my back. The CIA was trying to use me to do their dirty work, with no regard for my moral principles or my life. "What he doesn't know won't hurt us" seemed to be their motto.

The KGB, or whoever those men back at the hotel were, seemed willing to do anything to get their hands on our packages. I felt trapped between the two opposing forces. I looked up to see Ernst Koerber on his knees in an attitude of prayer. Joining him on my knees, I asked God's guidance and protection as devoutly as I ever had.

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For ten or fifteen minutes, we knelt there. I struggled to trust God with what seemed like an insurmountable problem. Finally, I felt the inner turmoil that had been boiling beneath the surface subside and my courage renewed. Then I felt a hand on my shoulder and saw a look of peace on Koerber's face, as he stood beside me.

"Well, Brother, there's a time for prayer and there's a time for action."

"Yes, but what action?" I got to my feet and walked over to the window. It was a beautiful night. The street was dead except for a small van parked at the curb. I was about to turn away when I noticed an elderly woman crossing the alley and going to the van. It was Frau Stadelman! She spoke to someone seated on the passenger's side of the front seat.

I wheeled around, grabbed my jacket, and began putting the counterfeiting plates in my coat pockets. At the same time, I warned Koerber about the van on the street and Mrs. Stadelman's apparent betrayal. He pocketed the contents of his clock and turned to go. Then I checked the window once more. Four men were getting out and Mrs. Stadelman was returning to the shop.

"This way. There's a fire escape at the end of the hall. We can get out by the back alley." Koerber was scared but in control of himself. I followed him to the sitting room door, which I closed and locked, hoping that would delay our pursuers for a few minutes. As I crawled out the window at the end of the hall, following Koerber out onto the fire escape, I saw the door at the head of the stairway open and the old woman leading the men to the sitting room, from which the light still shone through the crack under the locked door. Koerber was already climbing down the steel ladder attached to the side of the building, and I quickly followed him, my heart pounding in my chest and my blood pulsing in my ears.

We ran north up the alley, away from the so-called "safe house," and darted into a dark doorway to catch our breath and plot our course. From where we stood, we could see a large park across the next street north of Kesslergasse and decided to disappear into its shadows long enough to rest.

Our "Cold War" refuge was an iron bench behind a huge oak tree skirted with dense shrubbery. We sat there for several minutes, breathing heavily and listening for the sounds of pursuit. But the night was quiet, and we began to relax a little.

"Pastor Koerber, I see only two options. We either go ahead and cooperate with the CIA,

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and compromise everything we believe in and teach, or we destroy the contents of the clocks and go home. Either way we risk being killed by the KGB. If they don't get us, Schuster's crew might arrange an accident for us."

There was a long pause as we contemplated the trap in which we found ourselves. Koerber broke the silence.

"Tell me, Pastor Connell. What do spies fear?"

"Well. . . I suppose they fear public exposure as much as anything."

"Precisely. So why don't we give them some publicity and get ourselves off the hook at the same time?" An idea had excited Koerber and his voice rose from a whisper to normal volume. Had I been able to see his face, I probably would have seen a smile and a glimmer of hope in his eyes.

"As I see it, if we can tell our story to the media and turn over the evidence to Interpol, neither side will lay a hand on us. Our subsequent deaths would only confirm our story. If we can go public, we should be safe.

"At the same time, we can discourage intelligence agencies from trying to use missionaries to do their dirty work. But how do we get the media people to take notice of us? They're not going to show up to hear two obscure preachers, and we can't risk running around Bern in broad daylight until this is settled."

"Why don't we arrange for them to hear a world-famous preacher?" I asked, as a crazy idea crossed my mind.

"What do you mean?"

"Why don't we phone the newspapers and the television and radio people in the morning and tell them that Billy Graham will give the keynote address at the 10:00 a.m. session of tomorrow's evangelism conference? You can be sure they'd have the cameras rolling if they thought Graham were going to be there. All we have to do is go to the podium with an emergency announcement and, *voila*! A made-to-order news conference!"

"That's a brilliant idea!" Koerber paused. "Or it's a stupid idea. I'm not sure which!" He burst out laughing, and I joined him.

It *was* an insane and slightly unethical trick, but it worked! And we have lived to laugh about it each year since then. Ernst and I make a point of getting together each year at the evangelism conference, reliving that day in the summer of '82 when he and I stood before a crowd of fellow ministers and more reporters than I had ever before seen, to tell our story. We were instant celebrities, as a result, and, more importantly, alive! ■

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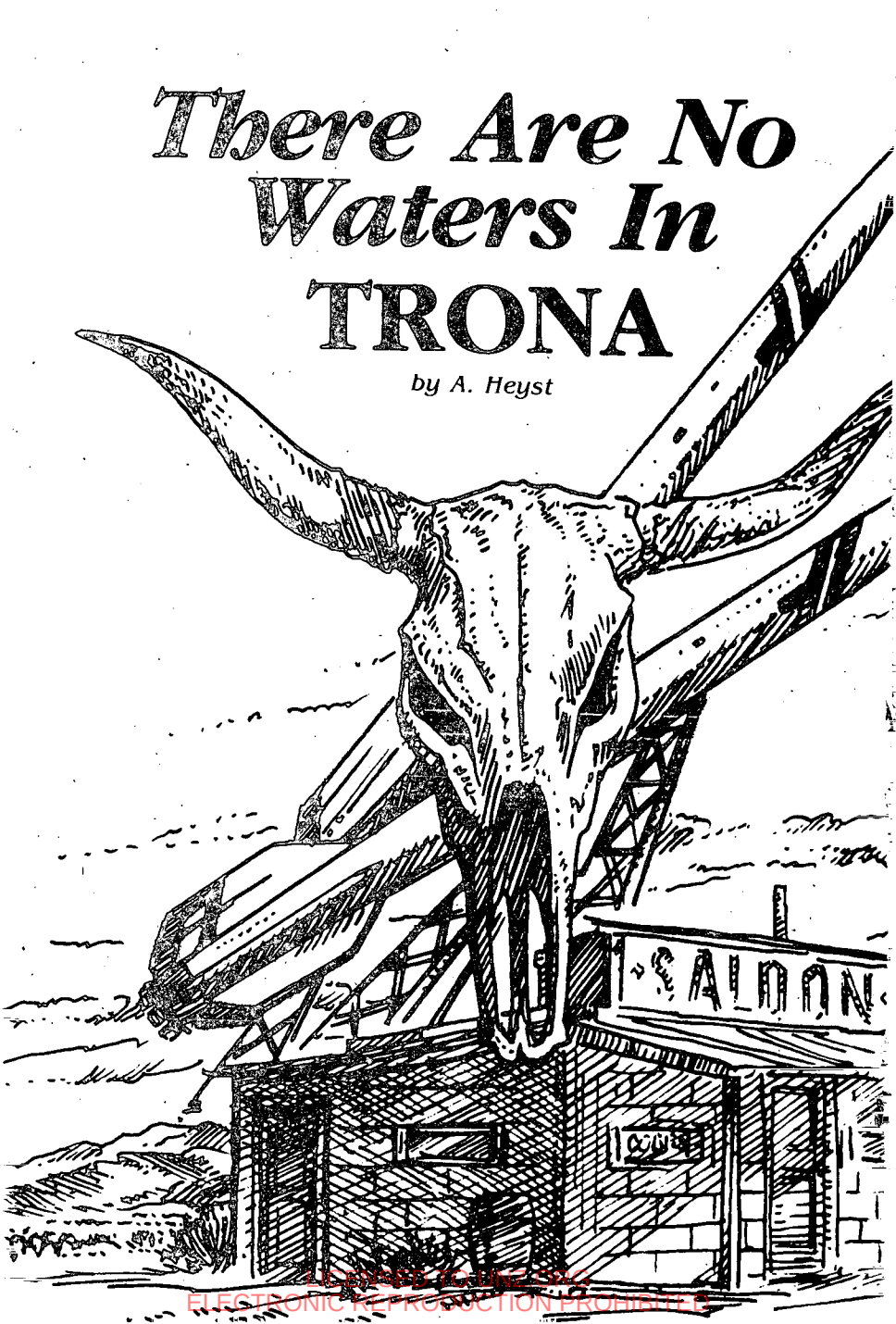
There Are No Waters In TRONA

by A. Heyst



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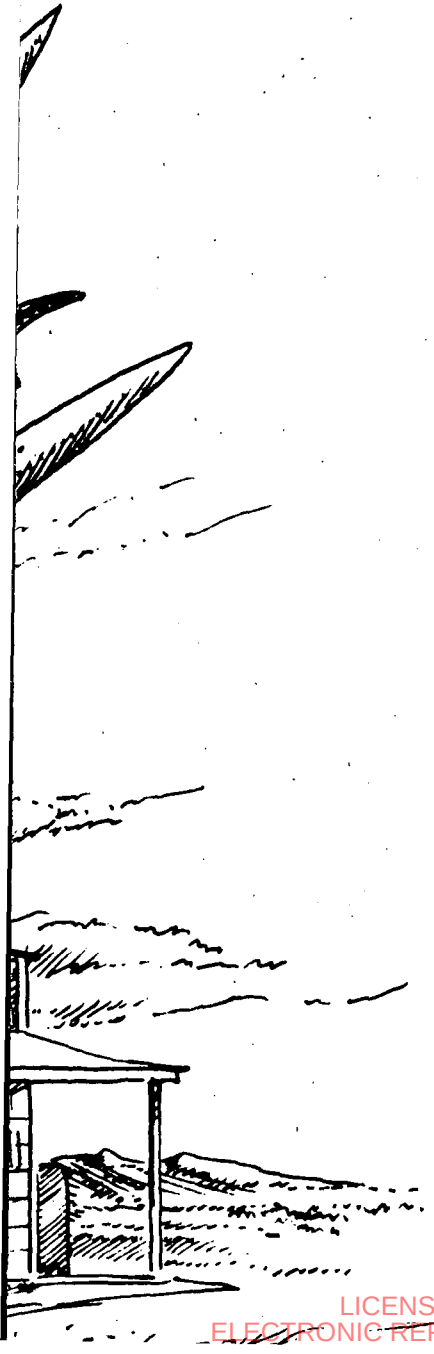

Illustration by Robert Spike

But there is a thing they call a lake, dry for a million years. The wind came off it that day, forty knots at least, straight out of Death Valley. A lot of the lake came along for the ride.

I cruised what passed for the main street, lights on and one eye on the temperature gauge. The town was all to one side, hard-edged shapes scattered on the lunar landscape. On the other side sat a thing that ate the lake and fed the town: acres of hoppers and towers, circled with chainlink and *Keep Out* signs. The fence wasn't needed. I wasn't after their percentage yield of potash. I was looking for a beer joint.

It was just where it was supposed to be, a lone cinderblock box with a flat roof and a tiny slit window holding a neon beer logo, a promise of cool and wet in the middle of hot and dry. A dirt bike was parked beside it and nothing was parked in front. I pulled in. Getting out of the car was like stepping into a convection oven, with sandblast as a bonus.

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Inside, it was just like any other desert beer joint: bar, tables, and a row of video games; a little too dark, a little too cool, and a little too plastic. The only people in there were a young woman and a kid. The woman was behind the bar and the kid was playing one of the video games. I headed for the bar.

The barmaid wasn't old and she wasn't young. Her hair was the same color as the kid's and her chin and mouth had come from the same gene pool. She wiped the spot in front of me and smiled a smile that died at the eyes, the kind of smile that comes from being used a lot.

"What'll you have?"

"Whatever's on tap."

"Nothing's on tap."

"A Coors, then."

She pulled it out of the cooler along with an iced glass. The beer was right on the edge of freezing. I ignored the glass and took three long pulls to get the grit out from between my teeth.

"Haven't seen you before."

"Nope."

I slid off the stool and ambled back to the row of games. The kid was playing a video shoot-em-up with murderous intensity. There was a pinball machine next to it and I stepped up and slid in a couple of quarters. The machine clattered in that good old pinball way and then spoke to me. They have voices now, instead of the old bells. Voices, multiple levels, and the video game look, but there will always be a difference: video games repeat their patterns exactly, because they're computers. A pinball never rolls or bounces the same way twice. It's the difference between literature and life.

I racked up a decent score and looked over at the kid. He was just a kid, thirteen or so, in a *Rolling Stones* t-shirt and cutoff jeans, his mind a million miles away. He looked pretty decent. Not that it made any difference. I went back to the bar.

"One more, just like the last one."

She kept that cold-eyed smile and waited for me to say something. This was a dance in the local style, where ladies don't lead. The wind rattled the tin roof of the place and the video game bleeped mindlessly behind me. I stayed quiet.

"What brings you to Trona?"

"The waters."

This time the smile reached her eyes.

"There are no waters in Trona."

"I was misinformed."

"Seriously."

"Seriously, just back-roading it. On my way to China Lake and wanted to see what kind of a place had a name like Trona."

She leaned forward a bit. The Navy tests things at China

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Lake. Things that need a lot of empty space to test.

"Up from L.A.?"

"Drove from there. Flew in from Minneapolis. Thought I'd poke around the ghost towns."

"Minneapolis? Brrr. Cold country. Whatever do you do in Minneapolis?"

I got a business card out of my wallet. It said I was a Senior Principal Electronics Engineer with the Avionics Division of a major electronics company. It was on the right kind of paper and had exactly the right shape of letters and was backed up with strings of ones and zeroes in computers all over the country. When she got through reading it, she leaned forward and let me look down her shirt. It was worth the trouble.

"Looks interesting." She put the card casually on the bar. I made like I had forgotten about it.

"Avionics," she said; "what's that?"

"Airborne electronics. Radar, flight control, electronic countermeasures. That kind of stuff."

"Oh, yeah, I saw a thing about that on TV. The Israelis. Really creamed the other guys."

"That's the main idea."

"Must be complicated."

"Gets a little tricky at times."

"Plenty hush-hush, too, I bet."

I put my finger to my lips. "Shhh."

She laughed, crossed her arms in front of her, and leaned back to let me have a good look at her assets. We were off to a wonderful start.

I worked the next week on the base at China Lake, locked in a vault with an airframe specialist and a propulsion guy, cooking up an infernal machine. We called it AAAAAM, after the mantra: the Agile All Aspect Air-to-Air Missile. It did everything but report the enemy pilot's name, rank and serial number before flying up his tailpipe. It was, as the lady had said, very hush-hush. It was also a lot of fun.

Friday afternoon, I went back to the beer joint. Real early, to catch her alone. I wasn't disappointed. She had a Coors out and waiting for me when I sat down.

"There are no waters in Trona," she said, "just beer."

I took a good pull. The wind wasn't blowing, but it was plenty hot outside.

"That's my excuse. What's yours?"

"For what?"

"For being in Trona."

"Everybody's got to be somewhere."

"But here? It may get cold in Minneapolis, but at least it looks like the Planet Earth."

"Well, the dirt-biking is good."

"Ah."

"We go out together, guys

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from the base and all. It's a ball."

"Ah-hah." That explained a lot of things.

"And the schools are good. No dope, good teachers, lots of equipment. The company sees to that."

"Oh, you're taking care of your brother?"

She leaned across the bar and gave me a playful little punch on the shoulder. She was getting downright frisky.

"He's my son. But it was nice of you to say that."

I took another long pull at the beer and looked at her carefully. She looked just as old as she was supposed to be, which would have put her right at the age of consent when she had the kid.

"Your husband work at the refinery?"

"No husband. Just me and my boy."

"From here originally?"

"No, Berkeley. Went to school there. Drifted down to L.A. Had to get out of there for the boy's sake. My cousin owns this place. And you?"

"Minneapolis boy. Came out here to school. Stanford."

She drew back in mock horror. "Capitalist pig."

"Pinko fag."

Just then the kid came through the door, backlit for a moment against the desert sun, his shadow long on the floor. Then the door shut by itself and the light was easy and dim again. He waved at his mom and went down the row of games, checking the coin return slots. There was nothing in them. There never is.

He came up and stood beside his mother in that kind of quiet but insistent way kids have. She wasn't amused.

"Stop pestering me. Go in the back and do your homework until the tips start coming in."

I fished out a handful of change and gave it to her. She dumped it in the tips glass behind the bar and pulled out two quarters for the kid. She gave him a moment and then went into the mother routine. "What do you say?"

"Uh, thanks, Mister." Then he bolted for one of the gaudy boxes. The quarter dropped with a little clang and the start-up bleeps began.

"Eat laser, alien scum!" And the place was filled with the sounds of electronic carnage. She shook her head. "Go watch him, he's very proud of his scores."

I shrugged.

"Go on. A boy needs to show off in front of a man."

I turned on the stool and she leaned forward and touched my elbow. "So does a mother, sometimes."

The kid didn't say much, but then having breakfast with your mother

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and a strange man isn't many people's idea of a party. She owned a mobile home just up the hill from the beer joint, about right for a middle-of-nowhere barmaid. You had to look close to notice that the furniture was a little too modern and a little too expensive, and the books were solid academic stuff instead of best-seller junk. One whole wall was covered with the kid's model rocket collection. He did pretty good work. I told him so.

"Uh, yeah, I guess so."

"Good hobby for around here. Plenty of places to launch."

"Yeah, it's okay."

"Want to go out sometime? I haven't flown a model rocket in years."

That perked him up. "Sure! I'll get my stuff. . ."

"Ah, not today. But next weekend for sure. Today I go to Vegas and make my killing."

She looked at me like she had heard this all before. "Killing at what?"

"Blackjack. Been practicing all week."

"They'll throw you out if they catch you counting cards."

"The secret is not to get greedy."

They both looked at me and shook their heads. They really looked like mother and son.

And go to Vegas I did. I stopped by the motel and changed into my most offensive polyester pants and a short-sleeved shirt that didn't match. I put a plastic pocket wallet with the corporate logo on it in the shirt and filled it with colored pens. Then I drove a couple of hours across the empty, empty desert to the city of dreams.

I cruised the strip, miscounting decks and depleting my budget. I tapped out about midnight and told my sad story to a cocktail waitress, to explain why her degree of uplift wasn't earning the tip it should have. She directed me to a couple of gentlemen who worked out of a Cadillac in the parking lot. They made a couple of calls from the phone in the car, some papers were signed, and I was back on my feet. By four in the morning, I was broke again. I headed back, the long shadows cast by the rising sun pointing the way, in just the right amount of trouble.

Her kitchen window looked out over the back of the place: tan dirt, tan rocks, sagebrush and an occasional tumbleweed. I stared out of it and picked at my bacon and eggs. We were alone. The kid had gotten himself up and off to school, something he evidently was used to doing. She poured me a cup of coffee and looked concerned.

"You haven't exactly been

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yourself lately."

I took a deep breath, made like I was considering a confession. "Got troubles."

"Lose at Vegas?"

"Worse than that. Tried to recover. Floated a loan."

"Uh-oh."

"Uh-oh is right. A couple of guys in a parking lot."

"What's the vigorish?"

"Fifteen hundred a day."

"What are you going to do?"

"I don't know."

I worked the combination and swung open the vault door. There was Harry, briefcase in his lap and inevitable cigar in his mouth. There is really no such thing as a good case officer, but Harry was a long way from the worst. I closed the door and enabled the alarm. Harry opened the briefcase. It was full of beer and plastic ice. He tossed me a can and got one for himself. He drained half of it at one chug, belched, and broke wind. Harry thought couth was for losers.

"This place is the back door to Hell." Harry came from a long line of Maryland crackers, and didn't like any place that didn't have catfish.

"No mosquitoes."

Harry drained his beer, crumpled the can and tossed it in the classified waste container. "Somebody just ran a complete background check on you. Employment, schools, the works. You're not applying for any jobs just about now, are you?"

"Not me. I've found a home in the service. Who ran it?"

"Somebody with access to a terminal in the L.A. Public Defender's office. All those lefties do favors for each other."

"Uh-huh. So now what?"

"Await developments."

The next time I went into the beer joint, I looked unhappy and she looked otherwise.

"Come on, things are looking up."

"Tell me about it. The clock is ticking at the rate of a buck a minute."

"There's a way out."

"What?"

"There's a guy, comes in here every so often."

"Uh-huh."

"Buys and sells stuff. Across the border."

"Sure."

"Came in last night. I told him I had a friend with a financial problem. Somebody who worked on the base, in hush-hush stuff."

I worked very hard to look like a man in a quandary.

"He said he could deal in that kind of merchandise."

"That's espionage."

"Oh, phooey. Just one little thing, just to solve this problem. What could that hurt?"

I made like I was thinking

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about it. "I guess not much. Where do I find this guy?"

"Oh, he's very careful. He'll only deal with people he knows."

"Like you?"

"Like me."

"You'd be taking an awful chance."

"Hey, what are friends for?"

"I'll make it up to you. I promise I will."

I spent the next couple of days in the vault, finishing the design of the AAAAAM computer subsystem. It was a beaut. Launch from any position, including in front of the target. Discriminate between engine exhaust, sun, and flares. Maintain constant relative positions of launch platform, missile, and target. I put the write-up in MIL-STD-483 format, marked each page TOP SECRET on top and bottom, and made sure there were classification markings on all the diagrams. The only thing more secret than the way it worked was the fact that it couldn't possibly work.

On the way to the beer joint, I stopped and jogged around the car a couple of times so I would be extra sweaty when I walked in. She didn't miss it.

"Got it?"

"In the trunk."

She called to the kid, who was busy with alien population control.

"In a minute, Mom."

"I need you now."

"Let me finish this game."

She shrugged and leaned back against the bar cabinets. In a minute he came up.

"Yeah, Mom?"

"There's a package in the trunk of the car. Put it in my saddlebag for me, okay?"

He looked at me the way he had looked during our first breakfast together. "Sure, Mom."

He went outside, came back in. I looked relieved, because I was relieved.

"Relax," she said; "money'll be here in no time."

She had slipped out without waking me or the kid, pushing the bike down the hill and starting it someplace else. I pulled on my trousers and shoes and walked out on the little porch. It was about three in the morning. The stars were close, the way they always are on the high desert. Up there among them, a helicopter would be hovering like a conscience, with Harry and a team and enough sensors to track a lizard into its hole. Their game was afoot. Mine was winding down.

Saturday, I kept my promise and drove the kid out in the desert to fly his rockets. The wind was up

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and he used extra-large parachutes to protect his detail work, and so we did a lot of running. We were just about out of engines when they came over the hill.

I had asked them to put on a show for the kid, and they had: three Huey Cobras, big green metal insects that kicked up clouds of dust from their rotorwash and drummed the ears with noise; offensive weapons in every sense of the word. Two of them kept station and the third floated over near us and set down with that strange delicacy they have.

"Jeez, what's the matter? We're not on the Range."

"We're in the right place and so are they. You get to ride in that one."

"Hey, neat . . . but what for?"

"It's the trip you were promised. It's time."

"Huh? But . . . nobody said anything. I mean, they just said to go back and act normal . . ."

"We keep these things surprises. People worry less that way."

"Oh, yeah . . . uh, where am I going?"

"A farm in Minnesota."

"Jeez, a farm? Out in noplace?"

"You'll be able to fish, camp, ride horseback."

"Big deal."

"There's a town nearby. Has a big arcade."

He looked seriously at me: "How late will I be able to stay up?"

"You'll have to negotiate that when you get there. Now run along; these people are burning a lot of expensive gas waiting for you."

"Do I get to take my model rocket stuff along?"

"I'll pack it myself and make sure it gets there."

"Okay . . . uh, what about my mom?"

"She'll be fine. You'll see her in six months or so."

He got a look on his face that any Junior High teacher would recognize. "Boy, is she going to be ticked off."

As soon as she opened the door she saw the kid wasn't with me.

"Where's . . ." I pushed her in and quickly pulled the flimsy aluminum door shut behind me.

"In a safe place." She stared at me. "It's over. No more waitressing, no more dead drops, no more entertaining the troops for fun and profit."

She started to run and I grabbed her. Then she shook a couple of times and started to cry. Rage, guilt, shame, chagrin, all of the above; you never know for sure. I let her cry it out. It took a while. Then she stepped back and looked me in the eye. "When do I get to see my boy."

"After you're debriefed. Four,

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maybe six months."

"Nice guys. No talk, no kid."

I kept quiet. There is no percentage in answering questions that answer themselves. Then she asked the one they all ask: "How did you find me?"

"Routine check. You just got unlucky."

"Some routine. My cover was solid." She rubbed her puffy eyes and sniffed. "A single mother and her kid. . .Oh, my God."

You could tell she knew all along. It happens that way, sometimes. People see the pieces one by one, but they can't or won't put them together. Then the pieces put themselves together.

"A lot of kids run away at his age. He just did it in style."

She started to cry again. This time she ran dry quicker.

"He's a good kid," I said. "He's just today's kid, not yesterday's. What he did took a lot of guts."

"And just what did he do?" The mother in her again.

"Hitchhiked to the base, wandered around until he found a building marked 'Security,' marched right in and told his story."

"The little traitor."

I shrugged. "The wheel turns. Berkeley is just a place to him."

She stood up. "Well, then we might as well get on with it."

I walked her to the car. She never looked back. ■

Did you know...

When World War I broke out, Lenin was on a walking tour in the Dolomites. Subsequently, he was imprisoned, and might have been shot as a Russian spy by the Austrians if the Socialist mayor of Vienna hadn't believed Lenin was a greater danger to the Russians than he was to the Austrians.

Charles II of England paid for his mistresses by milking the funds of the Secret Service.

He balanced the books somewhat by letting the damsels, when redundant, set up bawdy houses in which they performed excellent service to the State as informers for the infant espionage service.

In those days, spies were recruited principally from ambassadors to the court. Bribery and corruption were prevalent, as were visits to the bawdy houses, the view being taken no doubt that sauce for the King was sauce for the courtiers, too.

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FOCUS ON: KEN FOLLETT

"There's no faster way to learn to write commercially than by editing other people's masterpieces. You see immediately what not to do."

By Rider McDowell

Ken Follett is sitting in a room above Madison Avenue at 30th Street wearing cashmere socks. He's also got on a pair of wingtipped brogues, herringbone flannel pants, a blue button-down shirt, narrow silk tie, and a tweed jacket with a red check in it.

Follett is 36 years old. His income from his five best selling books is "about a million dollars a year." The same five books have thrust him into the number two slot in the world's thriller market (Ludlum is number one).

He is a medium looking man of medium height and build, square in the shoulders and lean faced. His dark hair is greying prematurely. His eyebrows arch dramatically at the ends, like the villain's in a low budget film, and his eyes are teak-colored and intelligent. While the rest of him displays a tremendous variety of expression—one minute he's slouched, knee over the chair looking almost boyish, next he's sitting bolt upright looking scholarly—the eyes never waver. It's as if these parts retain a grip on the rest of the body. The other parts wander, sag, exclaim, lounge, but the eyes maintain control. They know where the exit is.

There's talk that his latest book *Lie Down With Lions,* is going to outsell all the others. This seems logical; all of his books have outsold the previous. According to Follett's agent Al Zuckerman, *Lie Down With Lions* should make Follett between 2 and 3 million dollars in world-wide sales after two years, and that's providing there's no film deal. A film deal would add another million all around.

photo — Jerry Brown

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During the 1970s, when Follett was neither rich nor famous, British Security's 30 year rule concerning classified information, expired. All heretofore classified material from WWII was now available to the public. Amongst the files released were documents articulating Britain's deception plan prior to the Normandy Invasion. Forests were cleared in Norfolk, near the coast of England, across the channel from Calais. Rubber tanks and ply-wood Spitfires were erected on the site beside regiments of empty barracks and hordes of phony trucks and amphibious jeeps.

Nazi spies reported the ostensible developments and such was the success of the deception, German Intelligence sources convinced Hitler that a Calais invasion was imminent. Other reports showed Hitler actually anticipated an Allied invasion at a point further south, near Normandy.

Reading this information, Follett saw the potential for a spy to infiltrate the phony compound, discover the deception, and report back to Germany. That one exceptionally daring spy could alter the complexion of the war struck Follett as a best-selling idea.

In 1978, at 28 years old, the London based Follett shipped off to America a 125 thousand word thriller originally entitled "Storm Island." Zuckerman, who'd been representing Follett for three years handling the American rights to a string of "sub-Mickey Spillane" paperback originals by the then unknown author, recognized "Storm Island's" potential. The author-turned-agent, Zuckerman, had worked on the outline with Follett. "I knew the essence of the story but it wasn't until I saw the finished manuscript that I realized this book could make a fortune."

Follett was tentative. Fortunes are made every day (potentially) by publishers and agents over lunch. After consideration, Zuckerman took the manuscript to Arbor House, at the time still headed by its founder Donald Fine. "Fine is an aggressive guy and probably the most litigious man in New York, but in publishing Fine has no equal as far as getting behind a book and aggressively promoting it. Fine's passion for his books is almost manic."

Fine offered Zuckerman a $20,000 advance and promptly changed the title of the manuscript from "Storm Island" to *The Eye Of The Needle.*

Having renamed it, Fine then went about the business of editing and polishing the book. Says Fine, "When I first got it, the manuscript was in such a sorry state. . .this long English paper. . .I got so furious that I threw it across my apartment and spent two days tip-toeing around it. Eventually I went back and picked up

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all the pages and finished reading it. When I did finally begin the editing, I communicated with Follett in letters and on the phone. We agreed on some structural changes and basically cleaned it up. Nobody had ever heard of this guy, they hadn't been able to sell Follett in America, so I wanted to make sure when the world saw it, they saw it in its best possible condition."

"It is supper at an awards banquet in 1982. Follett is dressed in a dinner jacket and black tie. Beside him at the head of the table is NAL President Robert DiForio. Follett has paused in mid-discourse to sip from a pint glass of what looks like lager. A waiter passes and DiForio flags him and orders a beer like Follett's. Wrote Edwin McDowell of the NYT, 'The Waiter responded, saying that it wasn't beer but a split of champagne. Said DiForio, 'Right then I realized the difference between authors and publishers.'"

And they did. The book sold to the Literary Guild as a dual selection for $35,000: eventually being upgraded to a dual main selection with an additional $40,000 advance. A film company optioned the film rights. Before publication, the New American Library bought the paperback rights at auction for just over $700,000 (reprint and book club rights are generally split 50-50 between the hardcover publisher and the author). Within weeks of its publication, *The Eye Of The Needle* reached the top ten on the *New York Times* best-seller list, eventually climbing to number two. The book won the coveted "Edgar," the Mystery Writers Of America's equivalent of the "Oscar." In all, *Eye Of The Needle* earned Follett two million dollars (10% of which went to Zuckerman). Follett had arrived.

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"I got that first phone call from Zuckerman," Follett recalls, "telling me he'd sold the book and that I'd just made $20,000. I was thrilled. $20,000 meant I could pay my bills, go out to eat, give up work for two years, and write another. I knew from the beginning I'd written something special—at least I thought so—but it wasn't until the book actually sold that I thought, *Jesus, maybe I have something here.*"

He crosses his short legs and stares into the dregs of a cup of coffee he doesn't want. The teak eyes flick up, then back to the styrofoam cup. He drinks it. On the table is a copy of *Lie Down With Lions,* and on the back of the book Follett is staring nobly at potential purchasers, seeming to contemplate the follies of mankind and book sales. He's dressed in a leather poncho coat two sizes too big for him; his hair is darker and cut in the finest Punk-English tradition so it towers over him like a chef's hat. He appears to be the same man in the cashmere socks on the opposite side of the table, but in the photograph on the book jacket he looks ten years younger. "I wrote *Eye Of The Needle* in about three months, averaging 3,000 words a day—which I don't have to tell you is a pretty healthy rate. But I was hungrier then." He's since tapered his pace to 1,000 words a day. Since the photo on the book, he's had his hair cut.

After graduation from University College, London, Follett found work as a journalist on the *South Wales Echo* (Follett is Welsh and had spent the first ten years of his life in Wales). "Then I made it to Fleet Street and the *Evening News,* which at the time was Britain's leading evening tabloid. Before then, all I'd ever wanted to be was a really hot-shot journalist, but when I got to Fleet Street, I realized I didn't have the patience to rise to the top in journalism and started looking around. Then my bloody car broke down and, instead of thinking of a career change, suddenly I had to think about paying this bloody great bill."

A friend of Follett's from the *Evening News* had recently written and sold a thriller for 200 pounds. Follett sat down and endeavored to mirror that success. Within weeks, he'd finished his first novel (ironically entitled *The Big Needle*) and, like his friend, received the princely sum of 200 pounds. He paid off the car bill.

Eventually, an offer came from Everest Books to join their small staff as an assistant editor. Follett leapt at the chance and joined the firm of mostly ex-newspapermen: by now he'd decided his

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future lay in writing books, and working for a publisher seemed the best place to learn why books sold. "We were a young company and nobody knew anything about publishing because we were all straight out of journalism. But we knew how to promote, we knew the media, and that saved us."

Follett's job was weeding potentially publishable books out of the unsolicited "slush pile" and editing them. "The real thrill in publishing is not signing up Stephen King for his next five books. Anyone, the guys in the mailroom, can do that. The thrill is discovering the next Stephen King." He set about that task with vigor. "Most of the shit I had to work with suffered from one thing, the writer's failure to just get on with it. Unless you can develop a narrative voice that draws the reader through from the first paragraph, you won't make it. If on the other hand you can tell a story and not bore anybody, and keep it simple, you'll get published. That whole business about luck and fate doesn't apply, it's just a myth."

Learning novel writing from other people's mistakes enabled Follett to return to his own work with a finer eye and a new passion. "There's no faster way to learn to write commercially than by editing other people's masterpieces. You see immediately what not to do."

Follett is articulate the way most authors aren't; he speaks glibly in whole paragraphs. One pictures him holding court at a large

"Don't worry, that top secret package went Federal Express."

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dinner party. While he would be unlikely to don the party lampshade, you could see him encouraging someone else to. In the words of agent Zuckerman, "Most writers are dour, unhappy people. Follett enjoys life; I've rarely seen him down."

Follett labored at Everest for five years, editing books by day, composing his own prose at night. During his tenure at Everest, he churned out thrillers at the rate of two a year. At various times, the future best-selling author was known to readers of the world (primarily English readers) as Martin Martinson and Zachary Stone. His subjects ranged from murder mysteries to science fiction for kids. "Of course, at the time, I actually believed each one would be a best-seller. If you don't believe that you might as well not write. It took me about four or five months to write them and they weren't perfect, but I was improving and getting paid for them." His tenth and last potboiler earned him $2000 pounds: a ten-fold increase from the 200 pounds he'd earned to pay his car bill.

NAL, Follett's paperback publisher, recently released that tenth novel "The Modigliani Scandal" to mixed reviews. Follett called the experience an experiment. "Some of those books hold up well today, some don't. I skimped a little because I never really had the time I needed, or sometimes I was simply bloody lazy. I remember in one book I started off making the heroine have green eyes, then, 40 pages on, I forgot and gave her brown eyes. Instead of going back to correct it, I wrote a line further on in the book where the hero looks at her and says 'You have brown eyes, but I thought you had green eyes.' Of course I wouldn't think of doing that now, my publisher wouldn't allow it." He laughs and looks at the door.

Despite Fine's treatment of "Eye" and Arbor House's enormous success with it, Follett's relationship with Fine ended stormily before his second book *Triple* was published. "Without telling me, Fine completely rewrote *Triple* and sent me the galleys. I had to threaten him with a law suit to get him to change it back to the way it was. After that, it was just a personality thing. Fine thinks of himself as a great literary figure and sees publishing thrillers as an embarrassment. When I saw an opening, I ran for it."

Fine, who has since sold Arbor House to Hearst and has his own imprint, Donald I. Fine Inc., remembers differently. "If I'd published *Triple* in the state in which I received it, no one would have

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...t. The first thing I did was get rid of the title. Follett called ... Yellowcake Pirates"—how's that for a title? —I renamed ...ts published name *Triple.* Then I edited it. After I sent the ...ys to Follett, I got a call on a Sunday from Sydney Kramer, ...wyer at New American Library, who told me that Follett wanted ...e book put back the way it was or Follett would sue me. So I put it back and sat down cheek-to-jowl with Follett in my lawyer's office one weekend. Very undramatically we collaborated on all the changes."

Triple, for all its problems, shot to number one on the NYT bestseller list and shortly thereafter NAL offered Follett a three million dollar, three book deal. Fine says he couldn't match the money (Follett says he wasn't given the chance) and Follett jumped houses. As part of the three book deal, William Morrow, Follett's hard cover publisher, sub-license their rights from NAL. *Lie Down With Lions* is the third book in the contract.

Like the record industry, the publishing world is rife with flashes in the pan, one-hit wonders. Follett's next two books after "Needle," *The Key To Rebecca* and *The Man From St. Petersburg,* both major successes, reinforced his standing as a best-selling author of fiction.

Always game for a challenge, he then leapt into the non-fiction arena.

In the fall of 1981, American businessman Ross Perot approached Follett with what Perot thought was an ideal story for a non-fiction book. Perot, the billionaire founder of Electronic Data Systems—the largest computer data system in the world—had recently been involved in a plot to release two of his employees held hostage by the Iranian Revolutionary Government. During the last days of the Shah, members of the Provisional Revolutionary Court accused Perot's two senior employees, both American, of conspiring with the CIA. Without trial they were unceremoniously dumped behind bars in an impregnable prison inside Tehran. After negotiations broke down with the Iranians, Perot organized a team of ex-military men from among his employees at DSI. Their mission: rescue their brethren from the clutches of Khomeini. Under the leadership of ex-Green Beret Colonel "Bull" Simmons (the man John Wayne played in the movie), the plan succeeded brilliantly.

Follett liked the idea. His depiction of their mission, "On Wings of Eagles," became one of the biggest non-fiction bestsellers of the year. Says Follett, "I went into that with some real trepida-

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tion. I'd never tackled non-fiction on this scale and there were problems I wasn't used to dealing with. My main worry was how to accelerate the plot without inventing action sequences like I do in my novels. I was confined to the actual events in Iran." In the end, he managed to tighten the book by cutting abruptly and paring the story to include only the most vital scenes.

Before he does any actual writing, Follett sits down with his agent and his editor and revises the storyline. Once completed, he writes a first draft of the novel. "I usually do at least two drafts, maybe three, and within each draft I may rewrite a scene fifteen times if it doesn't sit right." He then sends the completed draft to friends for their opinion. Upon its return, he revises it accordingly. "I get all the opinions I can on a manuscript, then make my own decisions."

(A slender plain-faced woman enters the room, looks at Follett, smiles, and sets a styrofoam cup of coffee on the edge of the small table before him. He thanks her and waits until she leaves before bending down to pull up his socks. Then he sits back and looks nonchalant. "They treat you well here," he says, grinning. *Here* is an airy, book-strewn room at William Morrow.)

He is admittedly a man of expensive tastes, and a hard worker. He married early (he was 18; his wife Mary was 21 and pregnant with their son Bill) and spent a lot of years in very modest circumstances. After his first success, he sold his small car and bought a Jaguar. His family by this time had grown to include daughter Mary Claire. The Folletts picked up and relocated in Grasse, France, to escape England's enormous taxes (up to 98% of unearned income). Eventually, France soured on him. "There I was, drinking kirs, sitting by my pool in France, missing England, when I thought 'what's the point of being rich if you can't live where you want to,' so I put everybody in the car and drove back to London." The return of a conservative government under Margaret Thatcher had eased the tax burden somewhat. "The highest you pay now is, I think, 60%." The Folletts bought a house in London and a loft in Greenwich Village near Mercer Street.

It is suggested that, like Paul McCartney, he chose patriotism over finance. He laughs. "I don't mind telling you that I'm by no means in the same league with Paul McCartney. Besides, it's well known McCartney's a lefty." Follett supports the Labour Party.

Upon his return to England, his marriage foundered. "I think

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marriage at such a young age is dangerous. I had a good marriage and I've got two kids that I adore, but when you're still a teenager there are so many directions in which to develop. My boy is now 17 and six feet tall and I'm still young enough to enjoy him. How many 36 year olds can say that?" Follett divorced his wife and sold the loft in New York. "The thing I miss most about New York, believe it or not, is Franky & Johnny's restaurant near Times Square, where they used to serve these great steaks as big as plates; very nice place, lots of Mafia types. Is it still in business?" It is.

He has since married the former Barbara Browen.

He has confidence that "*Lie Down With Lions*" will repeat his previous successes. "I think it's the most well rounded book I've ever written. There's a very strong heroine part. The setting is in the Himalayas in Afghanistan, the most politically sensitive piece of real estate in the world." As in all his books, the writing is economic, sometimes flowery; the plot, while not as labyrinthian as some of his earlier plots, clips along at a good pace.

There remains, as with all writers, Follett's fear of the "unknown factor," his anxiety that for some unexplained reason the book will not do well. "Once you've had a hit, the second book, well, people buy that anyway. Whether you can sell a third depends upon the strength of the second. It seems I'm forever writing my second book." He is reminded of Peter Benchley, author of *Jaws,* who has since drifted from the literary limelight, and Martin Cruz Smith, whose book *Gorky Park* was the thriller of the year in 1981. "That's the reality of this business. What counts more than anything else, I'm convinced, is the quality of the book. You can hype something to the skies, but they'll only buy it once." So far so good. Follett estimates he's sold 25 million copies of his books, which continue to sell in the thousands each month.

In a world where having a brand-name is everything, Follett has a formidable toehold. It has increasingly been the policy of publishers to go after the big books they can put at the top of their sales lists. A known product versus the risky unknown. (Alexandre Dumas, one of the most famous novelists of the nineteenth century and author of *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *The Three Musketeers,* knew the value of his name on the cover of a book. Dumas was known to mass produce his novels, hiring fledgling writers to compose the prose on the basis of his story lines. Invariably, the Dumas name would generate healthy sales.)

"Publishing is unlike the film world, where nobody knows anything," Follett says. "In publishing, you've got a bunch of intellectuals who know their business and, historically, that business

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has gone after the 'big name' book. That's the reality. What hurts publishing is that so few really good businessmen go into it. Those who do do fantastically well. Look at Rupert Murdoch or Henry Luce."

Thus far, two of Follett's novels have been made into movies. The first, "The Eye Of The Needle," starring Donald Sutherland, bombed at the box-office. "I did the unthinkable and went to a screening in New York amongst the supposedly most sophisticated audience in the world. The movie wasn't that bad, and those I talked to who saw it liked it. But in the end, when Sutherland, who played the evil spy, gets shot, he takes fifteen minutes to bloody die. By this time the audience is roaring with laughter, and if they start laughing in a melodrama, you've had it. And I'm sitting there in a cold sweat wondering why I'm there at all—cursing the producers of the thing. In the book, he falls off a cliff; that wasn't dramatic enough for the movies, I gather, so they wrote their own version."

The Key to Rebecca was filmed for a four hour television mini-series starring Cliff Robertson, with David Soul as Wolf the saboteur. "A most unlikely bit of casting." Follett was happier with "Rebecca." "They shot it for something like five or six million, which is very little for a mini-series. I thought they did a pretty good job. I prefer the quality you can get filming for television; you have more time to develop character. But for selling books, which is the real point of these things, feature films are better. They have a longer run and get more promotion." "Key To Rebecca" was syndicated on television.

In Follett's books there is always someone, at some point, eating caviar with their bare fingers: Follett uses a wedge of toast and a spoon. He buys his cashmere socks at Turnbull & Asser. Home for this son of an internal revenue clerk was once a row house in South Wales. Home now is Cheyne Walk across from the Thames embankment in Chelsea. Among his neighbors are Bianca Jagger, J. Paul Getty, The King's Head Pub, and a family who owns a great deal of shares in Guiness. ■

Did you know...

A major working with the French Marquis in 1944, immortalised later with the nickname "Pinky," led a counter-attack, revolver in hand, through the gardens of the chateau where his team had been surprised in the middle of the night by the Germans wearing only his monocle.

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THE DOUBLE DOUBLE AGENT

by Arthur Moore

Central Control called me on the scrambler and put me through to Hardie, my regional boss. Hardie was a tough, no-nonsense man who was part machine and part robot. I had never liked him. If he had a heart it was made of tool steel. But of course it wasn't necessary that anyone like him.

He didn't waste any words. He said, "Listen, Davey, we've got a bad apple. Mike Train is a double agent and—"

"What! Train doubled? You're crazy!"

His gritty voice held a patience I knew he didn't feel. "I've got evidence."

"What kind of evidence?" I sure thought a lot more of Train than I did of Hardie.

"Photographs showing him with a dozen of the wrong people."

"That's his job!" I yelled. "How the hell could he do his job without meeting with the wrong people? You want him to tag around with the PTA?"

"What's it to you, Davey? Anyway, it's been decided. Train's got too much to sell. He has to be taken out."

I made rude noises in my throat. I knew who had decided. *Hardie* had decided. I knew him of old; he was a dictator and I was sure he thought Train was in line for his job. That's how Hardie operated, but only a few of us were on to him. Only a few of us dinosaurs knew Hardie from the old days. I was one of them and so was Train.

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"So you're it, Davey," he said. "You're the only one could do it. You take Train out." The phone clicked in my ear.

I hung up and stared at the wall. There was no appeal. It was an order, and I had been trained to take orders. I knew that if I didn't take out Train someone else would be around to do it, despite Hardie saying I was the only one. That's the way it worked. Hardie would get someone from another section, a stranger.

Of course I had been planning to resign from the Company for a long time. I wanted to get out—and not in a coffin. My plans were all laid and if Hardie ever got a whiff of them before I resigned, all hell would break loose. He might even hold up my pension.

I didn't know if Mike Train was a double agent or not. How could I? I didn't *think* so, but we hadn't worked together on a case for years. When I saw him, it was always to have a drink and talk about the old days or something . . . like ordinary people. We never talked shop.

But I had my orders.

Reluctantly, I made my plans. I am a very careful worker. I like to find out all I can about a target—all I reasonably can, without him spotting me. And there was a lot to know about this particular target. Of course I knew from past experience that he was secretive and a loner. He wasn't married and lived alone in an apartment in a huge complex. He was on the fifth floor and kept his car in the underground garage—both places heavy with security. I suppose I could have gotten in and bomb-fixed his car, but I took an easier way.

He took almost daily walks through the park; he liked to feed the pigeons, of all things. And he usually came out of the park on Hostler Street, where there was a big old arch and a statue of some Civil War general.

From a friendly source—we all have our sources—I obtained a silenced rifle. It was a .243 and came with a handful of hand-loaded rounds, just enough punch to do the job. I would be firing from about 25 feet, the way I had it figured.

Well, he never came out of the park at the same time, so I missed him the first day I parked opposite the arch. It was two days later that I got my shot. I parked on the same side of the street as the arch, with the car windows down and the rifle lying along the seat beside me. When he strolled out

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of the park, I lifted the rifle and bent down to look along the sights. The muzzle didn't stick out of the car more than six inches. . .and in the daily traffic noise, the shot was silent.

Hardie crumpled up and fell in a heap.

I put the car in gear and got out of there in seconds. No one even looked in my direction. Then I went to meet Mike Train. I was wearing a new spring dress and had just had my hair done. We were on our honeymoon, after all. ■

"I know you know and you know that I know you know but what you don't know is that I know you know I know you know!"

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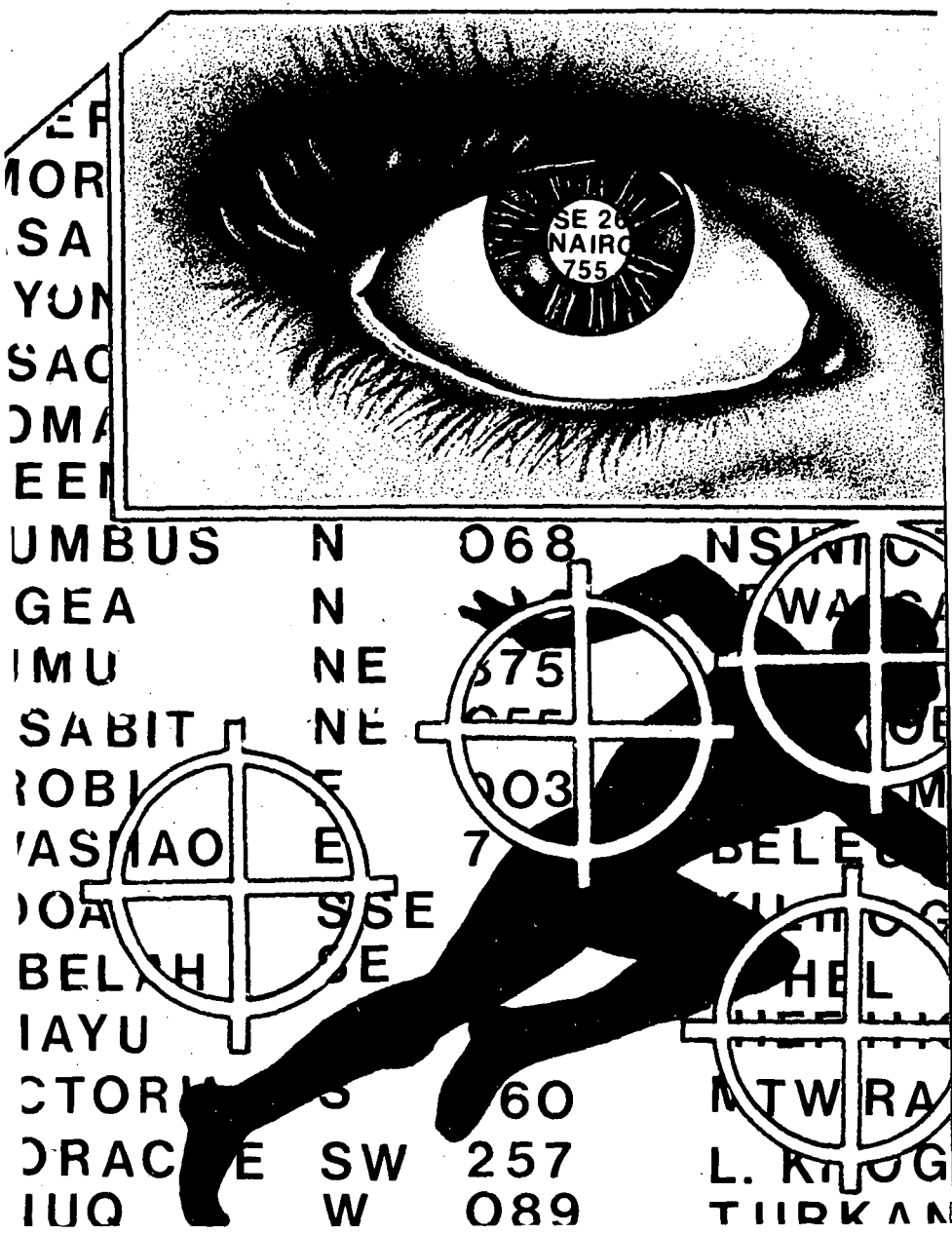

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Clay Pigeon

by William Arden

The only sounds inside the grim building were the occasional footfalls of the watchmen, hollow and echoing, the ghostly music of the Ambassador's radio (he was an old guerrilla long afflicted with insomnia), the lonely typewriter of some late-working attache and the distant flush of a toilet.

A cat moving in the basement would have been heard.

But the man who appeared in the basement made less sound than any cat.

In the dark and silent celler, this man stood for a full minute, absolutely motionless, listening.

All in black, even to his masked face, he was more like one of the shadows of the cellar than a man. He seemed hardly to breathe. When he finally moved, it was more as if the shadows of the basement themselves were moving.

Soundless, without any apparent effort, the man floated through the basement to the large incinerator. At this hour, the incinerator was cold. The shadowy man climbed inside, stirring the black ash but making no sound.

Illustration by Mike Romesburg

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His masked face looked once up the interior of the brick chimney that towered four floors upward. Then he hung the small black case he carried around his neck and hauled himself up into the chimney in a smooth, fluid motion of powerful muscles.

Inside the chimney, he braced his feet against one wall, his back against the other, and began to move upward like some large, silent insect. Sweat poured from his masked face, from the strain of the climb and the heat inside the chimney, but he never faltered; the power of trained muscles moved him rapidly upward.

He emerged from the chimney onto the dark roof of the Embassy. Nothing moved in the silence; the city itself was as still as a ghost city. The man stepped quietly to the only other way out of the Embassy—the single roof door that led downward. There he stood listening for a full five minutes without moving a hair, a shape lost among the shadows of the roof night.

Once there were footsteps behind the door leading down. The man in black did not move. The door was tested inside, found to be locked securely, and the footsteps faded away below.

Still, for a time, the man below did not move. Then, satisfied that he was alone on the roof, he walked to the rear edge that faced a dark park thick with trees across a wide, modern boulevard. There was no traffic on the boulevard, and no one walked.

The man took three objects from his case and fitted them together into an odd, wide-barrelled rifle with a thick stock. He aimed at the base of a large tree inside the park across the boulevard. There was a faint popping sound and something flew across the wide street and embedded itself in the base of the tree.

A thin nylon cord now reached from the roof to the park. The man quickly detached the cord from the rifle-like launcher, tested it with hard pulls, attached a small plastic hook and fitted the hook to the parapet. He then fitted a metal slide onto the cord, gripped the slide in both hands and, with his black case slung again around his neck, swung himself out into space.

The slide carried him quickly down the cord into the park across the street. On the ground, he released the tension of the cord, flipped the plastic hook loose from the parapet above and retrieved the cord.

Within seconds, he vanished.

A day later, Scott Wilson, field engineer for MacNeil-Aird Pumps, Limited, Glasgow, stepped off a small East African Airways jet at Embakasi Airport and rode the nine miles into Nairobi. In the Kenya capital, he checked in at his hotel, then walked directly to the offices of East Africa Mines, Limited.

A slender, frail-looking man,

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Wilson attracted no attention on the busy street corners of the bustling metropolis. He was just another of the hundreds of employees of British business firms who were in Kenya to aid the growing country—and to reap the proper rewards for their firms, of course. Only the keenest observer might have noticed that Wilson was not really as frail as he appeared, and that he walked with a power it was difficult to disguise.

In the office of Sir Gerald Saks, the managing director of East Africa Mines, Wilson presented his card and sat down to wait with other callers. When his turn came, he was ushered into the inner office and the door closed behind him.

It was at that point, the meeting ceased to be routine.

Wilson advanced to Sir Gerald's mammoth desk and sat down without speaking or being asked to sit. Sir Gerald pressed two buttons. There was a faint click as the outer door locked tight, and a low, humming sound began—the noise of a jammer designed to block any possible listening devices.

"All well?" Sir Gerald asked, as he sat down behind his desk.

"Yes," Wilson said. "No trouble getting in or out for a good man. The usual Embassy security. One of the flaws is an incinerator they don't use enough."

"And the primary route plan?"

"In the military attache's office, naturally. Not hard to reach or find, but it can't be moved or filmed. They'd know instantly."

Sir Gerald frowned. "Will a memory job work?"

"I'm not sure. Possibly. We have to try," Wilson said.

"De Hoog, then?"

Wilson nodded. "I think so. If MI-Five will lend him."

"They have to lend him, in this situation," Sir Gerald said. "The question is, will he do it? He doesn't have to, you know. His record and status give him a choice."

"He'll do it," Wilson said with certainty. "I've studied his dossier. If there's one threat in his whole record, it's his pride in his skill and nerve."

Sir Gerald's mouth worked for a moment as if he were chewing something he did not like much. "Very well, I'll get to it at once. We have only four days."

Scott Wilson nodded, stood up and, after Sir Gerald pressed the button to unlock the door, left the office.

The next day, in a small hotel on the Rue St. Sulpice in the Latin Quarter of Paris, Scott Wilson opened the door of his room to admit a tall, thin, colorless man in his late forties. The man closed the door softly and stood for a moment looking at the shabby little room and at Scott Wilson.

"So you're Scott Wilson," the man said in a soft voice as colorless as his face. "I've heard about you. Number One man, the way I

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was in my day, eh? Perfect record and no nerves?"

"Is there any other way to last in MI-Six, De Hoog?"

Paul De Hoog smiled. "No, I suppose not, really. Which is what makes me wonder why your mob needs an old war horse like me? You know I'm on a routine desk at MI-Five."

"We know and, frankly, C isn't sure. But we need a memory job," Wilson said, "and your specialty outweighs your problems."

"Ah, yes, my problems. Age, over-the-hill, familiar to the enemy," De Hoog said in his drab voice. "I remember why I was sent to MI-Five. You don't have a memory-man in MI-Six now?"

"Not one with your degree of ability. I don't think that gift loses its edge, eh?"

"I can still memorize the plans of a machine gun in twenty minutes and retain them for a week. I keep in practice, just in case..." De Hoog stopped, smiled at Wilson. "But you know that, of course. You'll have been watching me."

"We've watched," Wilson said. "This job isn't as hard as a machine gun, but you won't have twenty minutes."

"A first-risk penetration?"

"An Embassy, and no trace left in or out."

De Hoog shook his head. "I haven't had a field job like that in seven years. You know that. If I had some time..."

"You don't. We go tomorrow."

"Damn it, Wilson, I'm not ready for a job like that!"

Wilson nodded. "All right. If you don't think you can do it, we won't risk it. We'll have to risk someone else. C was doubtful, anyway, as I said."

De Hoog bit his thin lip. His pale eyes studied Wilson. Then he sat down slowly. His drab voice took on a hard edge.

"How long would I have to study my entrance and exit?"

"You wouldn't have to. I've already been in and out. I can tell you in detail how you do it."

De Hoog watched Wilson. "I see. You tried to do the job yourself, located the target?"

"Naturally. These papers can't be photographed or removed without revealing they've been tampered with. I'm not a memory man."

De Hoog nodded. His fingers began to pat at his clothes until he found his cigarettes. He lighted a cigarette, blew some smoke and closed his eyes. His thin mouth grew thinner.

"All right. Tell me what the job is," he said.

Wilson let out a slow breath and sat down facing De Hoog. "The Kenya Government got wind of a plot to send in a large convoy of weapons, all types, to a rebel group of Somalis in the north. At the moment, the Somali rebels are weak and isolated, but with enough guns, they might start a full-scale guerrilla campaign.

"Kenya asked Whitehall for

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help. MI-Six was assigned, top priority, full cooperation. We pinpointed the shipment, the date, everything but the route the guns will take."

"And the route plan is in this Embassy?"

"In the military attache's office under full security measures—the best the KGB has developed and passed on to the security outfits of the various People's Governments."

De Hoog whistled. "That's good! I see why you need me."

"I don't think we could find another agent to do the job," Wilson said quietly.

"What's the procedure?"

"Three-man team: you, me and a radio operator. A quick, one-shot operation that can't be discovered. The radioman and I wait in the park while you go in. You memorize the route plan as fast as you ever memorized anything, bring it out, give it to the radioman for instant transmission, and we go."

De Hoog seemed to be thinking it over carefully. "If they get the smallest hint, they'll use an alternate route."

"Yes, and we don't have time for another try. If we fail, the guns get through—unless a patrol stops them."

"Which is something we don't want to chance," De Hoog said dryly. "The whole purpose of espionage, eh, Wilson? Simply a matter of reducing the element of chance in human affairs."

Wilson said nothing. De Hoog smoked calmly until his cigarette began to burn his fingers. Then he stubbed it out and stood up. Wilson followed him out of the room.

Scott Wilson was the first to arrive at the African capital the next day. In his permanent guise of the engineer from MacNeil-Aird Pumps, he got velvet-glove treatment at Customs-Immigration. He was in the country to make a legitimate business call on a government department.

The radioman, Max Simms, an old SOE man still used by MI-6 on a freelance basis now that his wartime sabotage skills were only rarely needed, flew in next from Dakar. Simms came in the unlikely role of a Presbyterian minister arriving for an African ecumenical conference. It was a role he had played often in the wilder days of wartime subversion in enemy territory.

Paul De Hoog arrived last. He had re-activated an old-cover—a museum curator—and was not too sure of it after so many years. But all seemed smooth at Customs, and De Hoog took a taxi to his hotel.

He unpacked and went down to register for a meeting on Primitive Art that he was using as his reason for being in the capital. It was after he had registered at the Cultural Center, and was ready to start for his meeting with Wilson and Simms, that he saw Volkov.

De Hoog recognized Volkov at once. He was not likely ever to forget the KGB man who had

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almost taken him eight years ago. The question was—did Volkov know him? He had little doubt about that, either. Volkov was carefully *not* watching him, and De Hoog realized in a flash that he had used the same cover when he had met Volkov last.

De Hoog did not hesitate, but left the Cultural Center and immediately began the danger procedure. Giving no hint that he had spotted Volkov, he went straight to the hotel where Wilson was staying. At the desk, he asked for a Mr. Terrence Poole to be paged, and then went to a fashionable tea shop on the main square of the city. He ordered tea, and when he had finished, went to the men's room. In a booth, he sat down.

"Trouble?" Wilson said from the next booth.

"I've been spotted. A KGB man, Volkov. I'm pretty sure he's not onto me specifically. I think he just spotted me on a routine watch of some kind, probably at the airport."

"Yes, we knew they had some KGB men here as a precaution. It was part of the risk we had to take," Wilson said.

The two men talked softly, listening for anyone else entering the men's room. No one did. There was no other exit from the lavatory, and a proper routine called for Volkov to wait outside to pick up De Hoog rather than risk being spotted by entering the toilet.

"All right," Wilson said. "I'll handle it. You leave here and act normal. Go to the meeting room. Simms will be there."

De Hoog left, paid his bill and walked out into the African heat and sun. He noted that Volkov was still following him. He saw nothing of Wilson or Simms until he had almost reached the Health Club where they were to meet.

Then, as he crossed the last wide street among the crowds of people, Wilson came toward him, and went past without a flicker of recognition.

De Hoog stopped to look into a store window. He glanced behind just as Wilson and Volkov came together in the thick of the crowd.

For a second, Wilson and Volkov were side by side. Then, imperceptibly, Wilson jostled Volkov. The KGB man missed a step. Something seemed to flash so fast even De Hoog, watching, barely saw it. Wilson walked on and in moments was lost among the crowd.

Volkov seemed to take two full steps further, his eyes looking toward De Hoog, before he suddenly collapsed. He fell down in the crowded street.

Women began to scream. The people split apart around the fallen KGB man like a school of frightened fish, leaving him lying alone in a wide space. Seconds later, the entire street was deserted and police were running up. De Hoog walked quietly on and entered the Health Club.

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He changed, got his towel and went into the steam room. Simms and two other men were there. De Hoog did not speak to Simms. Some five minutes later, Scott Wilson appeared, wrapped in a towel. The three men soaked up steam for ten minutes and then slipped, one at a time, into a small, private room where the patrons could nap and rest in peace.

"Damn it," De Hoog said, "was it necessary to kill him?"

"Yes," Wilson said.

"What if he had already reported me?"

"A chance we had to take. Speed is the essence of this operation, De Hoog. You know that. There wasn't time to build up any alternate method."

"Now they know someone's in the city," De Hoog snapped. "They'll be alert."

"Can't be helped. They don't know what we're here for, or Volkov would have moved against you. He was trying to find out what you were up to. I don't think he had time to report, but you're right that they'll be looking for us. We'll have to hole up until dark."

"I don't like it," De Hoog said.

"You want to pull out, abandon it?" Wilson said. "I wish we could set up some diversion, but there just isn't time. Now, say it—do you want to call it off?"

De Hoog watched Wilson and seemed to be thinking. "No," he said at last.

"All right, then," Wilson said. "There's a room in the cellar of this building. I had it ready, just in case. We'll use it now. One at a time, and be sure you're not spotted."

The room was small and dim, lighted only by a single guttering candle. Not actually a room at all, but only a special hiding place made from an old storage bin, and without electric wiring. The three men sat on the floor and Wilson went over the plan for the night.

After that, they sat in silence. Max Simms dozed, his years of sabotage training having taught him the ability, and the need, to sleep anywhere. Wilson cleaned his pistol by the flickering light of the candle. De Hoog smoked.

"Do you have a family, Wilson?" De Hoog said after a time.

"Yes."

"It must be hard on them. I mean, to know that they can't be important in your life. In espionage, you make your choice early, don't you?"

"It's a job, De Hoog."

"No, it's a life," De Hoog said. "When you choose it, the hidden world, whatever you might have been, ends. Once you enter the shadows, spy or counterspy, whatever else you might have become stops growing. Whatever talent you have becomes only cover. You stop developing as a person once you start."

"No one said it would be easy," Wilson said.

"Does your family know what

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you do, Wilson?"

"No."

"But they've guessed. Your wife has. You're an engineer, but engineers can fly home when a child is sick. A spy can't. A hundred moments have made your wife guess that you live in a different world than the real one."

Wilson said nothing.

"Every minute, what we seem to be doing is only a facade to cover our real life. We went through a door as eager young men, and that door closed behind us and shut out the real world."

"Do you regret it, De Hoog?" Wilson stopped cleaning his pistol to watch him.

De Hoog lighted another cigarette. "I never married, I have no family and I don't know what I might have become. I'm on a desk, and I don't regret my work. But someday, I'll actually retire; we both will. Then what, Wilson? Neither of us has grown a hair since we stepped through our door, or had a private thought. We go out into a world we don't know—useless."

"We have our jobs," Wilson said.

De Hoog nodded, and after a time, closed his eyes and joined Simms in sleep. Wilson sat in silence and watched the two sleeping men. He watched them for a long time. He did not sleep at all.

It was a moonless night, and at ten p.m. Scott Wilson and Max Simms crouched in the dark park across the boulevard from the Embassy of The People's Republic. A car was hidden in the trees behind them.

Paul De Hoog had been inside the Embassy for six hours.

Embassies, unlike top-secret installations which tend to rely on external security and forget the internal, have little external security during business hours. People come and go all day, with varying credentials, and Paul De Hoog entered through the front door in the guise of an archeologist looking for permission to dig in the wilds of The People's Republic.

Once inside, and his request for a visa taken under consideration, De Hoog had little trouble slipping into the storeroom Wilson had described to him. After that, it was only a matter of waiting. Five hours of waiting, alone and silent, in the corner of the dark storeroom, crouched in the shelter of a large crate, until he knew that Wilson and Simms were in the park and ready. Then another two hours of waiting until it was time to emerge into the dim night corridors and make his way carefully to the office of the military attache.

The office was dark and locked. De Hoog picked the lock quickly and silently, slipped inside and closed the door. The alarms, as Wilson had found earlier, were not set until one a.m.

In the office, De Hoog paused at the door until his eyes were accustomed to the dark. He heard sounds in the other offices, but

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none in the corridor.

He took a tiny black box from his pocket and attached it to the doorknob by its own magnet. It would warn him with a small signal if anyone approached.

He studied the office and selected where he would hide in case someone did come. He chose a sheltered corner behind two filing cabinets.

Then he walked straight to the safe.

He worked carefully, without wasted motion, and twice smiled to himself to find that his skills had not diminished. Sweat poured down his intent face. He brushed it from his eyes, dried his fingers and continued to work. At last, he sat on his heels and the safe swung open.

There was a faint click. So faint he wasn't sure he had heard it at all. He sat there on his heels and stared at the safe.

An alarm?

De Hoog listened for five minutes. No one came.

He continued to study the safe mechanism. Wilson had done it all before, and Wilson had not mentioned any device in the lock of the safe.

De Hoog finally decided it was some part of the lock itself—a time delay, perhaps—that he had circumvented.

He went ahead, locating the route plan as Wilson had told him. It was in a semitransparent envelope, as Wilson had said, so that it could not be photographed without being removed from the envelope—and if it were touched it would react to show that. But it could be taken out of the safe—still in its envelope—so that it could be used by Embassy personnel without activating the detection chemical.

Satisfied, De Hoog removed the entire envelope, gently, by the edges, with his gloved hands, and laid it on a desk. He did not light a light, but began to read it in the dark. His eyes strained and watered with the effort of reading in the faint light.

It was a simple one-page document—no more than a series of place names and compass directions with mileage. De Hoog read it through once. Then once again, slowly.

He sat back, closed his eyes and let two minutes pass. Then he read it twice more.

He had it.

Quickly now, he returned the envelope to the safe, closed the safe, and went to the door. He removed his alarm signal and listened. He heard nothing. He slipped from the military attache's office, locked the door and hurried silently to the locked door that led down into the cellar.

The door was locked to prevent entry from the cellar, not exit into the cellar. He went down into the darkness and faded into the shadows to wait for night security to go into effect at one a.m.

Now, for the first time, he began to shake. His nerves, under their

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old control while he had been working, began to jump as he waited for one o'clock. By a strong effort, he got himself under control, and then it was time.

He emerged from the shadows and stood listening. He heard the faint footfalls of the watchmen and the distant music of the Ambassador's radio. He went to the incinerator and climbed into the ashes inside. He slung his black bag around his neck, and started up with his back against one wall of the chimney and his feet against the other—as Wilson had done.

It happened when he was almost at the top. Suddenly, his nerves began to jump again, his muscles weakened, and he felt himself slipping!

His back and feet slipped down a foot. He grabbed at the smooth brick wall, pressed hard with his hands to hold himself above the abyss of the chimney—and something slipped from his pocket.

His pistol.

It fell, striking the walls, all the way to the bottom, rattling all the way.

There was no time to think about it. His muscles responded to the danger, his nerves steadied and he went to the roof.

He had no time to be careful now.

In the dark, Max Simms looked at his watch and then at Scott Wilson. "One-five. He should be coming out on the roof soon."

"Is the radio set?" Wilson asked.

"Ready. I'll send the data two seconds after he comes down the rope."

"Open the transmission then," Wilson snapped. "Get them standing by on the other end."

Simms went to work over his small transmitter. He estimated he had a minimum of fifteen minutes for his complete transmission. It would take anyone at least that long to triangulate his position, even if they were ready. It was not likely that anyone would be prepared for a triangulation operation, so there shouldn't be any trouble.

"There he is," Wilson whispered sharply.

Faintly in the night, they saw De Hoog at the parapet across the empty boulevard. De Hoog raised the special gun and there was the small popping sound. The projectile embedded itself in the base of the tree not five feet from where Wilson and Simms waited with the transmitter.

Simms watched the Embassy roof through infra-red night binoculars.

"He's got the slide hooked on," Simms reported. "He. . . He's stopped. He's looking back!"

Wilson watched the roof through his glasses. "He's spotted someone on the roof!"

"He's coming down!" Simms hissed.

At the parapet, De Hoog swung over, his hands gripping the slide, and began to

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descend toward the darkness of the park.

Two men appeared at the edge of the roof. Two quick shots exploded the night.

De Hoog jerked and fell like a stone onto the pavement of the wide boulevard.

Wilson and Simms watched as the tall, thin agent lay in the street and then, slowly, tried to raise. Pain contorted De Hoog's face, and his left arm hung limp, broken. Blood poured from two bullet wounds.

Simms half rose from the bushes and trees. "We can help. . ."

"No!" Wilson snarled. "Too late."

Simms raised his glasses and looked at De Hoog, who had managed to rise to his knees out in the empty street.

The men on the roof fired twice more.

De Hoog was knocked flat to the street again, prone on his bloody face. Once more, he tried to get up, his head lifting and looking straight toward where Simms and Wilson watched, hidden.

"My God!" Simms whispered.

Wilson said, "What?"

"He's. . . smiling!" Simms said, watching De Hoog through the night binoculars. "He's smiling at us! He's looking at us! He's nodding, Wilson! We've got to go and help him!"

"Wilson raised his binoculars. "'s useless, Simms."

the street, Paul De Hoog to his face and lay

Up on the roof, the two men had gone.

"He's dead," Wilson said. "Let's go!"

Simms looked hard at Wilson. "What?"

"Come on! Now! They'll be out in a second. Leave the radio. Hurry!"

Stumbling, Simms followed Wilson to the hidden car. Seconds later, they were racing away into the night.

Behind them as they escaped, Simms saw three men around the dead De Hoog, and another man shouting as he found the radio.

Then Wilson and Simms were safely away. . .

Two days after the failure of Paul De Hoog, Scott Wilson and Max Simms were admitted into the private office of Sir Gerald Saks, managing director of East Africa Mines, Limited.

Simms dropped into a chair the moment the door had been locked and the jamming device activated.

"Bust, a total washout," Simms said. "Poor De Hoog."

Wilson and Sir Gerald did not answer the radioman, or even look at him. Wilson sat down and looked at Sir Gerald.

"He was too old, out of practice," Simms said. "Damn it, he had to fail."

Now Sir Gerald looked at the radioman. "We had to risk it, Simms. Your work is completed. Your bonus will be waiting in London. Good-bye now, Simms."

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The radioman sat for another moment, hesitated as if there was something eating at his mind, then nodded and got up.

For a full minute after the door had closed behind the radioman, and been securely re-locked by Sir Gerald from his desk, Scott Wilson sat silently studying nothing at all.

Then Wilson said, "He smiled. De Hoog smiled before he died."

Sir Gerald said, "We got the guns last night, and four of their agents. The Somali rebels are on the run. It's over for good. You did your job, Wilson."

Wilson nodded as if he didn't even hear, listening not to Sir Gerald but to some voice inside him. "Simms knows. Or he doesn't know, but somehow he senses what we did. It's eating away at him deep inside. He knows, but he doesn't want to know."

"Yes, and he'll make himself forget quickly," Sir Gerald said.

"I won't. I know what we did, and I won't forget. I won't forget De Hoog's smile."

Sir Gerald said nothing more for a few minutes. Long, slow minutes. Then he began to talk in a soft, flat voice like a father talking to an hysterical son, or a psychiatrist soothing a manic patient:

"There was no other way, Scott. You know that. There was no way to get hold of their main route, the primary route, without them knowing we had it. It was your plan to go in first, as you did, and get the alternate route. You . . ."

Wilson said, "I got the alternate route. I'm good, young, trained. I went in and got the alternate route first."

Sir Gerald's soft voice continued on as if Wilson hadn't broken in, a soothing voice: "You knew we had to make them use the alternate route. You picked De Hoog, because we had to pick De Hoog. He was a known memory man. The KGB had a file on him. They would know who he was, and they would just believe that we might try with a memory man. With the radio-transmitter you planted on him, it was just possible that he had gotten the primary route out to us. *Possible,* no more, but we both knew that that would be enough to make them use the alternate route. They *did* use it. They fell for the scheme, and we beat them."

Wilson sat like a stone. Then he said, as much to himself as to Sir Gerald, "We picked him to *fail.* He was old, slowed-up, out of practice and too proud to admit he couldn't do the job. We knew he would be too proud to refuse the job. We counted on his making a mistake. We picked him purposely to make a mistake, and so be killed. We couldn't tell him—no. Then it would have been a fake try, and they would spot a fake. No, it had to be a real try. De Hoog had to try his best to fool them. We knew his best wouldn't be good enough, and he would fail."

"It worked, Scott. We won," Sir Gerald said quietly.

"Yes," Wilson said, looking

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Sir Gerald. "But he smiled just before he died. He *knew!* You understand? De Hoog knew, at the moment he died, what we'd done! He knew he'd been picked because he was sure to fail!"

Sir Gerald Saks said nothing. His cool, quiet eyes simply watched Scott Wilson in the silent office.

Wilson stood up. "I'm through, Saks. My last job. I won't do it any more."

"It has to be done, Scott. I wish it was a better world, but it isn't. As long as the world is as it is, the work must be done, and no one else can do what you do."

"No. No! Not this way. Not any more. I don't mind killing a man—just death—but De Hoog knew what we'd done. He knew he was picked because he would fail! What did we do to him in the last moment when he knew? What happened inside him, Saks? He was a proud man, and we murdered his pride."

Wilson breathed hard. Sir Gerald opened his mouth to answer, but Wilson didn't wait. He spun on his heel, stalked to the door and walked out.

In the street, he turned into the first bar he found. He ordered a double Scotch, drank it, then ordered a second. He stared at his own face in the mirror.

Then it wasn't his own face he saw. It was De Hoog, smiling at him. De Hoog saying: *"It's not just a job we have, it's a life. When we entered this shadow world, a door closed behind us. . .When we retire, we go out into a world we don't know. . .useless!"*

Wilson drank, and stared into the mirror at the smiling face of Paul De Hoog, and suddenly Wilson saw the real truth behind that dying smile.

Wilson drank, ordered a third double, and knew the real, final truth of Paul De Hoog's smile: *De Hoog had known all along what the job really was!*

From the start, Paul De Hoog had, somehow, known that he had been picked to make a mistake, to fail, to die—for the job. *"When we retire we go out. . .useless."*

For a long time, Wilson stood at the bar, not drinking now. He thought about his wife, his family, his world and his work. A rotten world and rotten work. But it was the only world and his work was the only work he could do that few other men could, and maybe the world would get better some day.

Some time later, Wilson walked from the bar and turned back to where he now knew Sir Gerald Saks would be waiting for him. He thought of Paul De Hoog, who had died knowing what his job really was—because it was his job, and because, in the end, it might mean something.

In the African sun, Scott Wilson walked taller. ■

SPY TALK: *Tea and Biscuit Company* - slang for the C.I.A.

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BLOWFLY

by Andrew Offutt

"Cigarette smuggling," N said. "Dirty business. Coming in from the Outer Pleiades, we think. Suppose you check into it." He leaned back and traced an invisible design with his finger on the orange baize of his desktop. Eyes with no more color than a pool of spring-water peered keenly at Ian Bean.

Bean frowned. "Cigarettes? Real tobacco, d'you meansir? Damn!"

"Save your language for *les girls*, Bean. Just do get out there and put a stawp to that operation."

Stawp, Bean thought, showing nothing of his nervousness. *Stawp, stawp—ah! Him and his bloody thick accent!*

His superior extracted a pipe from his waistcoat pocket and regarded it as if he had never seen it before. Drawing the big Sevres cannister of BaccoFree from the corner of his desk, he went through the nine digit combination that opened it and commenced filling the pipe. He looked up again and affected to be surprised to find the other man still present.

"Well, Agent?"

"My. . . my license expired yesterdaysir."

"Oh." The pleasant old father-image left off filling his pipe long enough to pull open the corner drawer of his big Brown & Williamson desk. His pale hand slapped the small kayplast

Illustration by Bruce Baker

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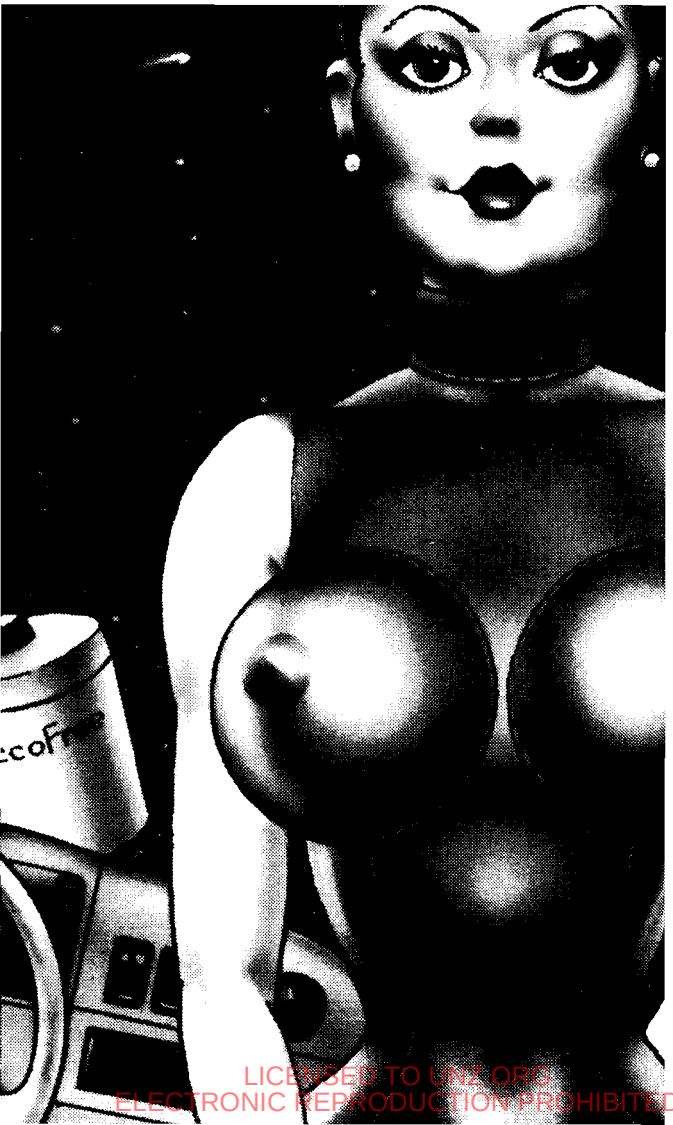

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square down on the orange baize between them. "Here. Came in just yesterday. Since you took down five last year, this year's quota has been increased to seven. Congratulations, Agent. . . and good luck."

N poked the pipe into his mouth, then drew it out and pointed it at Bean.

"Oh, and look here, Bean. Do try and do something about those predictably persnickety habits of yours, won't you? I don't mind the consistent if nawt quite cawnstant womanizing, my boy, but as to clothing, food, drinks; you persist in being *different*, and thus the most un-secret agent we've gawt."

Bean was examining the little document with the familiar fleur-de-lis spaceship model of Terra Alta Imperata at its top.

Know that on this **12** day of **Einstein** in the year **2271** the bearer has been duly invested by Earth High Command with the absolute right to **kill** not fewer than **6 (six)** nor more than **7 (seven)** human beings in the ensuing thirteen months.
By my hand and seal:

A.S. Connery
Comptroller-general, TAI

(THIS LICENSE VOID UNLESS SIGNED BY THE BEARER AND MAY BE REVOKED AT ANY TIME WITHOUT NOTICE. FAILURE TO EXERCISE THE PRIVILEGES HEREIN DESCRIBED SHALL CAUSE THIS LICENSE TO CEASE AND DETERMINE WITHOUT RENEWAL AS OF 11-Einstein-72.)

Bean took his silver Cross XKE-52 pen from his plastall jacket and signed the document. After checking the charge of glissenite in the pen, he replaced it in his pocket. He picked up the license and rose.

"Do try to stay away from the, ah, 'ladies' this time, Bean," N said, with a paternal wink as his best agent departed his office.

First closing the door, Bean sneered. "Up yours, paternal old father-imagesir."

"I beg your pardon!"

"Sorry, Pennypincher," Bean said, gathering a bit of N's

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"Her hair was fashionably blue and she wore four one-inch ribbons, along with a fashionably hair-matching purse and imbedded pin to show her devotion to S & M games."

secretary's anatomy in a small pinch. She giggled and wiggled; he handed her the license.

"Oh, wonderful," she cooed, leaning her pinched portion into his hand. "You get to do in *seven* this year! That raises your code number, you know." She was inserting the license into the Klugman 22r Projectacopy, twisting her lean body so that a small bulge of it remained in his grasp.

"Oh? What's it?"

"Two more zeroes, *septuple*-0 six, she said, motioning him to stand close to the machine. "Darn! You'll have to let go now, Ian. But my lunch-hour begins in twelve minutes. . ."

"Septuple-zero-six," he muttered, ignoring her invitation. "Nice alliteration." He fingered the scar on his cheek, a souvenir of a previous dangerous case—amatory, not business—while the machine indelibly printed his new license on his forearm. It would fade away in exactly thirteen twenty-eight-day months, he knew. *Well, by then I'll have earned a new one, and with a higher number, too.*

He left the big green baize headquarters of the *Contra-Indicative Agency For Blatant Injustice* and headed for his car. Cigarette smuggling, he mused. This was big! Smuggling illicit tobacco into the system could wipe out all humankind, protected as it had been for nearly two centuries from the evils of tobacco, aspirin, saccharin, sugar, maple syrup, cerebration, foreign movies, responsibility, guitars, men's magazines, and work. He was thrilled by the prospect; his last mission had involved only the destruction of a planet, and Bean was tired of penny-ante cases.

He had to get out there fast, find the master-genius behind the plot, and his ladyfriend, get captured and nearly killed by him, and destroy the monster. With, preferably, at least six of his underlings.

His Stephens Excalibur SSd-70 sat where he had left it, its

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rear tyre on the kerb. Disdainfully, he lasered away the parking ticket branded into the windscreen and deposited it in the big orange baize littrBug buzzing along the sidewalk. He slid into the car and spoke the code to start the engine, listening to the drumbeat roar of twin Boeing 808 Competition engines and the six Paxton-Largo XL superchargers. Engaging the wood-plated **GO** lever, he took the Excalibur straight up to 9,300 feet and keyed **PARK** before actuating the spacedrive's warm-up sequence.

Not until then did he turn to the young woman decorating the red Astor-Martian leather seat beside him. She was a complete stranger. Her hair was fashionably blue and she wore four one-inch ribbons, along with a fashionably hair-matching purse and imbedded pin to show her devotion to S & M games.

"Name." The hair-thin stiletto in his pocket comb menaced the jiggly salient of one of her extraordinary warheads.

"I'm Angelus Early." Her voice was a sensuous murmur, hardly wavering as, deliberately, she leaned into the stiletto. It vanished and a shudder ran through her.

"Hmm. Unorthodox name," he said, and pursed his lips as he inspected her thigh. His expert eye at once detected plastic enhancing.

"My daddy loved the noonday bells," she explained. "Always said that if he had a boy he'd name him Angelus. He had me instead."

Bean raised his eyebrows. "Really. But tell that to your shrink program, not me. And he'd never heard of 'Angela,' hmmm? Noonday bells. That tells me you're from the Outer Pleiades; the Christian colony." He was keying in their course, not looking at her.

"That's right. No, Daddy'd heard of the name Angela, but thought it was too close to 'Angel' and might be sacrilegious. He was like that."

"Ummm," he said, turning to fumble with her seatbelt. Her superstructure impeded his efforts by getting in the way more than somewhat.

"How—oooooh!—come you have the o-old-fashioned—ummmmm!—over-the-sho-Hoo!-oulders and down-the-front se-he-ssseatbelts?" she asked, writhing and panting in the helpless response he had come to accept as normal behavior.

"More fun," he told her, with the cryptic terseness of a pro-

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fessional secret agent long accustomed to saying little indeed about anything.

He managed to secure the buckles despite the spasmodic heaving of her warheads, agitated into a rapid rise-fall-shudder by her excited breathing. Bean was an expert at such seatbelt fastening. He gave each magnetized buckle a final few pats before turning back to Excalibur's console. Angelus swayed sensuously in the seat, her eyes hooded.

Bean depressed the last key and the spacecar shuddered as the big Deusenberg Mark XXVIII engines cut in. The force of acceleration hit them, and Bean noticed with interest that even all those g's had little flattening effect on the pneumatic Ms. Early. His own muscles straining, he lit one of the filtered Baccofrees made for him by Lorillard's of Louisville in the building with the three gold bands. He knew she was impressed by his lack of concern—and his great strength, firing up the cigaret during acceleration.

"So you decided to hitch a ride home, eh, Angelus Early? I suppose you're prepared to pay your way."

"Oh, *yes*." Even belted into her seat she managed to press his leg with the most pneumatic thigh he had ever felt. "More than that, Ian Bean. Yes, I know you; you're the very best C.I.A.F.B.I. agent. I'm betting you're on the Pleiades tobacco case. Uh-huh; I know about that, too."

Damn, Bean thought. *Terrible waste to have to kill her so soon.*

"My father was a tobacco farmer, Ian, on Pleiades 28; the planet called Domino. They. . .they killed him."

Bean was relieved. The lie detector indicator on the console remained dark. Delighted that he wouldn't have to kill and eject her as another piece of space flotsam after all, he gave her his most supportive, emotional response: "Mmm. Bad business." He glanced at the moon in passing. "Who's *they*?"

"The people you want," she said softly, staring straight ahead at nothing. "Ernst Starrover Blowfly."

"Blowfly! That Jovian fiend! I'll be glad to get another crack at him! He killed my wife last week, on our wedding day. That really angers a man, you know?" He ground his teeth.

Hurriedly, then, he popped the antidote, having felt the spurt when he accidentally broke the cap on his Final Solution molar: the one with the poison. He checked the Timex

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Solar-pal strapped to his wrist against the chronometer on the console just above the disguised muzzle of the strychnine-loaded needlegun aimed at the passenger seat. Glad that he wouldn't have to trigger it after all, he slapped a relay. He heard Angelus' whoosh of breath as the ship ceased accelerating.

His hand fell to her ultra-pneumatic thigh. The hand bounced, and he had to clamp on, kneading warm and incredibly ripe flesh.

"Mmm . . . look here, Angelus, we have two days, and this is the family model SE SSd-70; these seats make a single bed. Shall we?"

She was reaching for her seatbelts. She shrugged bouncily. "Let's!"

"Here," he said, "you unfasten mine while I undo you."

She nodded and began fumbling with his straps. They were at least three times as long as necessary in unfastening each other's safety belts, since their hands slipped frequently from the buckles. The monosyllabic sighs and moans rising from her throat increased in intensity. They were frenzied animal sounds by the time he stabbed the button that dropped their seatbacks to the horizontal. Their hands went from buckles to zippers and ribbons.

For the next two days, Ian Bean explored the depths of space. Or so he dictated into his report.

At Harry's New York Bar on Domino, a bright-eyed young woman and a tired-looking man with a scar on his cheek sat in the corner at a little reelWood table covered with black baize. He wore a zip-all; she, the standard mandated female attire on Domino, called a Pilgrim. The nunnish attire did not seem to fit. The waitress approached amid a swishing of long black skirts.

"Somethin-for-ya?"

Bean's gaze wandered up and down her, smokily. "Uh-huh. Later. Right now. . ." He turned to Angelus. "What about two silver Kirsches with *Bresse chicken au gratin de Lautrec*, with *boeuf-acheter des chevrolettes* topped off by *escargots Bardot a la mode de nuit*, Ange? Oh, and some *Chassagne-Montrachet 2268?*"

"Anything you say, Ian," she murmured, and her eyes contained more stars than the sky above Pleiades 28.

He patted her knee and turned to the waitress, who was

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keying entries to her menu pad at a furious pace. "Got that?" he asked, and when she nodded, he added: "Now as to the aperitifs. Instead of a half-ounce of lemon juice, I want—"

"You wish to customize your drink, sir?"

"Of course," he said. *When in the name of Morris did I ever order a drink straightforwardly? That'd blow my whole image.*

"Just a minute, sir, I'll send you Gilbert," she said, and nodded in Bean's direction as she passed the bartender. He came over to the little table, wiping his hands on his Cannon XKR-61 apron with the three gold rings.

"We want two silver Kirsches," Bean said amiably, in that deep, commanding voice. "But instead of a half-ounce of lemon juice I want five-eighths of an ounce, strained through a piece of clean white muslin two inches square. Do leave out that yukhy egg-white! Add an extra three-eighths of a teaspoonful of Sea Island Sucrosub to compensate for the extra lemon, and add *one drop* of anisette to the Positano before you mix it with the Kirsch, which should be MacInness' green label. And please be sure the glasses are properly chilled to forty degrees. Got that?"

Gilbert the bartender stared at the seated man, his face working in carefully restrained rage, indignation, and insult. "Yes, sir. Centigrade or Fahrenheit, sir?"

"Fahrenheit," Bean said, in a voice that indicated his effort not to add the word "dolt." He sighed. "Oh—and would you serve the drinks in Jovian martini glasses with the three gold bands rather than Old Fashioneds, please? More esthetically pleasing."

The bartender bowed low, hands folded beneath his apron. When he straightened he held an FN-Browning CCF 7.69 mm automatic dartgun, loaded with solid-fueled Nosler darts. It was leveled at Bean.

"This time you've gone too far!" he shouted, and splattered Bean's head all over the wall behind him.

Angelus shot to her feet, knuckles to teeth and eyes looking as if they were anxious to escape their sockets. "You—you killed Ian—Ian Bean! You must be *Blowfly!*" She swallowed hard. "You recognized him by his prissy-persnickety habits, didn't you!"

"Nope. I'm Gilbert Grenouille, a darned good bartender. And Ian Bean or not, professional bartenders *hate* smart-alecks who try to tell us our business!"■

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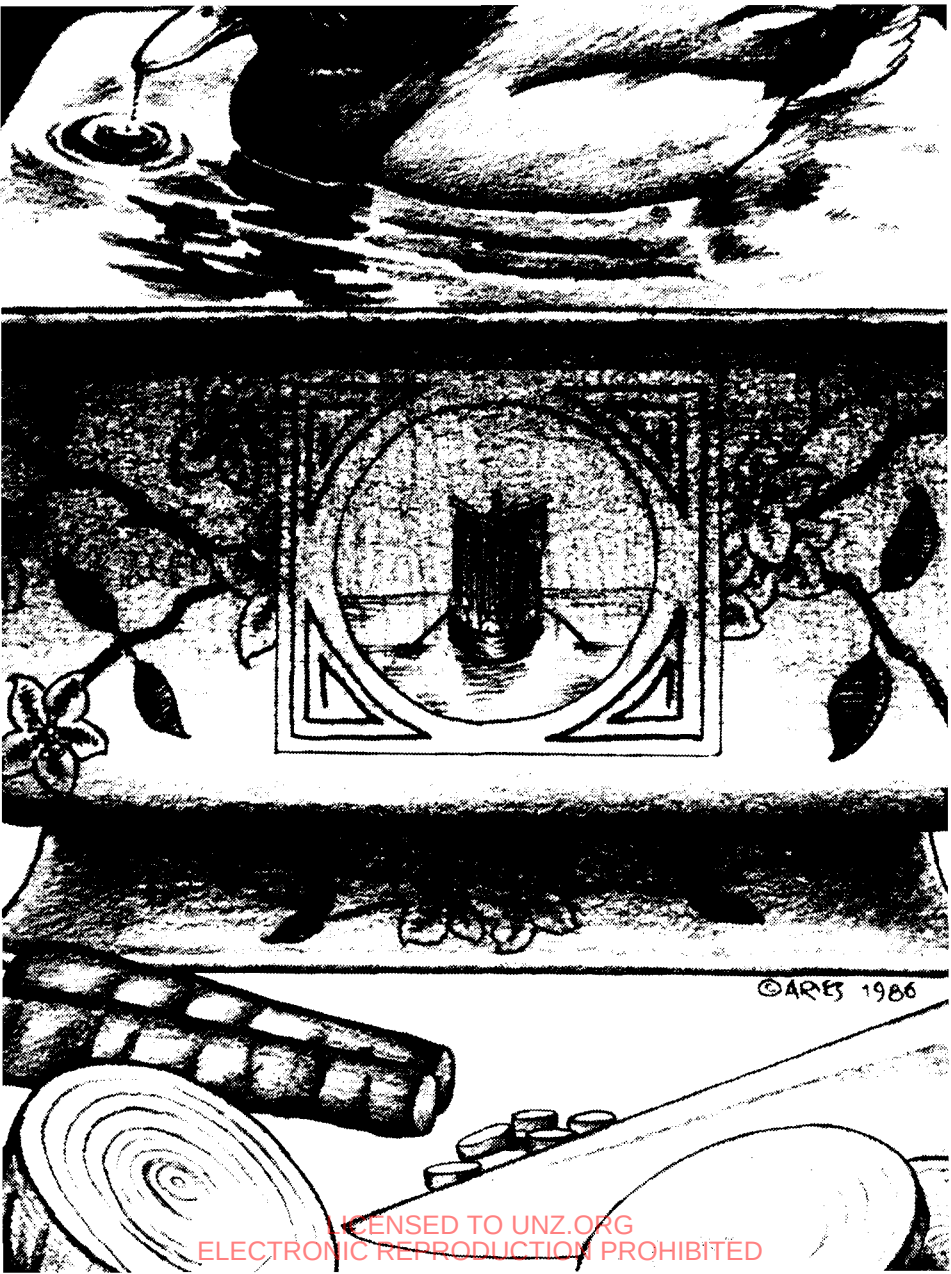

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DUCK SOUP

by Catherine Logan

The day started all wrong. Not that I'm such a stickler about routine myself, but Mr. Leitov was, and I've learned to conform. I mean, if you take someone's money, you should do things his way. I didn't give a damn for Leitov personally. How could I? I'd only been working for him about eight weeks. Hardly enough time to develop the old "loyal serf" attitude even if he was the kind of man to inspire it. This was only a temporary job, you understand; a short-money-making interlude. Emphasis on short. Eight weeks was a long time for me to work at an indoor job (let alone *one* job). I can't really help it. Sometimes my Virgo moon gives me conscience problems, but moving on is in the nature of Aquarians. We're a bit flaky. Old Leitov could have been the most charming, gorgeous man in the world, and I still would have felt I was in prison. If I hadn't broken my wrist, I'd never have even considered being anyone's housekeeper. Too confining, and too permanent-sounding.

Three months before, I'd been following the grape harvests from the Med up, on a line toward the

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German vineyards, like I've done for the last couple of years. Only this year we had some early snow in Northern France. Of all the rotten luck! First morning out at Laballe's vineyard, I took a spectacular fall on the stairs to the pickers' dining hall. It's a little hard to pick grapes with one hand, so that was it for the rest of the season.

I was sort of marooned in the Champagne, and the outlook was lousy. The wrist, not to mention having to go on eating without any money coming in, soaked up what I'd been hoarding for my winter on the Med. There's no work down there to speak of—particularly when you're working illegally—so you need something in hand for the months between olives and oranges. I could add that being a twenty-year-old female who looks like a skinny teenager doesn't improve things when I get caught in a situation like this. Generally speaking (I have met a few exceptions), men seem to find unprotected teenaged girls a real turn-on. And all the more so if they are, like me, blonde and blue-eyed. Oh, the more educated dress their line up in some kind of knight-rescuing-distressed-damsel garbage. But it all boils down to a couple of nights in the hay and the guy gone one fine morning.

Not that I can't take care of myself. I've been slumming around Europe since I was sixteen, and I've seen a helluva lot of life in these four years. Enough to know I'm not going to lie down and play anyone's victim. I may be Aquarius, but with Leo rising and a Virgo moon people usually walk around me when I'm really mad.

So when I found myself stranded and somewhat incapacitated in Champagne, I began to look for ways to survive the coming winter before I was left without my small emergency-only fund. It would have been humiliating, after all this time, to have to go begging to an American Consul. Not to mention the nuisance of having my family find out where I was.

For three weeks after the accident, Monsieur Laballe, the owner of the estate where I'd been working, let me stay on in one of the old farm sheds. It was pretty miserable. No heat, no running water, no toilet. And for the most part, no protection from howling winds and constant damp. Just the same, it saved me rent on a room. It also saved me some on food, because the estate cook always managed to give me some hot leftovers at least once a day if I went around to the back door. I think the Laballes felt a bit responsible for me.

But I was getting sick of huddling in my sleeping bag with very little for oral comfort except cold cheese, cold bread and cold wine. It was worse than a dog's life. And the cold hurt my mending wrist with a deep, throbbing ache.

When Monsieur Laballe sug-

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gested the job with Leitov, I was receptive out of sheer desperation. I needed to get out of the hole I was in. I needed to get warm.

Leitov, I was told, was an old acquaintance: a Jewish-Canadian businessman who was production manager for a Belgian firm that made pre-fabricated buildings under license to an American company. That's a mouthful. You figure it out. Anyway, this guy had suddenly lost his housekeeper. Would I consider? Two meals a day to cook and light housekeeping; a formal dinner party only on rare occasions.

The pay was extraordinary for what looked like a snap. I was one of those rare girls whose mother taught them to cook. And this guy, Leitov, was willing to pay my fare up to Belgium as well. I talked to him on the phone. Yes, he knew all about my wrist, but Laballe had given him a very good account of me. While I was still wearing a cast, the cleaning woman's niece would come in to cook dinner if necessary. I wasn't to worry. He often went out to dine anyway. Everything would be just fine. Duck soup, he said several times. Duck soup. It seemed to be a favorite expression.

I kind of figured him for a lecher. He was just too accommodating. But I hadn't been in his house a day before I discovered that he had a very beautiful and attentive girlfriend—a blonde, curvaceous, businessman's dream called Danielle Bofours—who occupied both his thoughts and leisure. In fact, he spent most of his evenings with her.

The routine was simple. He got up at six, went for what he called his "constitutional" (which was an hour's walk through the flat, uninteresting farmland that isolated his modern ten-room house from the rest of the world), back a little after seven for a quick shower and shave, and then breakfast promptly at seven-fifteen. He lingered over his coffee (very particular about how it was made), one soft-boiled egg, two thin slices of rye toast with bleu cheese spread, usually working through a stack of office paper. At seven-forty-five, he rose, went upstairs to get his briefcase, and then drove off at precisely seven-fifty. He would arrive at the factory at eight. I presumed the rest of his day went the same: timed to the second. At six, he came back. If he meant to eat in, he then spent two hours in the study off his bedroom working, and dined at eight. At nine, he watched television, listened to music, or read in his room. His lights were out by eleven. If he ate at Danielle's, he left home at seven-thirty and returned at a quarter to eleven. Weekends, he was often gone for the entire day, but a few times his girlfriend came to us for the day. I stayed in the kitchen when she was around.

He was like a clockwork man: always punctual, never personal, and very coldly disapproving if anything interfered with his

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almighty schedule. I saw him as a caricature; a two-dimensional cut-out.

The cleaning woman was another one. My French was pretty good, but she acted like she only knew Flemish. She'd respond to basic requests, but that was all. A dour, elderly woman with a mouth that was no more than a thin line drawn on a blank wall.

Oh well, it really was only temporary, and the routine was simple enough. Duck soup, like he said. I admit, too, that I was having fun playing house after four years of being a homeless *voyageur*. Leitov had some good cookbooks and on the days he wasn't there for dinner, I experimented with sauces and pastry dough. The successes were remade for him when he ate at home. I can tell you, I was really very comfortable: an undemanding job, good food, my own room, a TV and radio, and lots of time to read my way through Leitov's extensive library to help fill in some of the holes never finishing high school had left. And I was getting paid for all that. Money that didn't have to be spent on food or shelter or taxes. Money that could be saved.

I was sitting pretty.

Until the morning Leitov broke his routine.

He was out of the house at six-o-five, all right, but he took his briefcase and his car.

Not a word to me. I was just shaking the cobwebs out of my head when I heard the garage door squeal. I looked out the window—my room is above the garage—and saw Leitov, briefcase under his arm, going inside. A minute later, he backed his fancy sports job out and drove off in the direction of the factory.

It was as if by doing so he ceased to exist.

I know that sounds melodramatic, but it was a feeling that dogged me even while I went through the usual motions: laying the table for his solitary breakfast in the dining room (I always ate in the kitchen) and getting the food prepared.

But he hadn't come back by seven, or seven-fifteen, or seven-thirty. At eight, I dumped out his egg and stopped keeping the coffee hot.

At eight-thirty, his office rang. At least the lady said she was his secretary. I'd never had to take a call from them before—or from anyone, for that matter. Leitov's routine was invariable. There was never any need for anyone to hunt him down.

"Oh, isn't he there, yet?" I asked, all innocence. I didn't love Leitov; I didn't know him at all, really. But he was the guy who paid the bills. I owed him at least a minimal loyalty.

At nine, a man called, speaking French with a heavy German accent. I referred him to the office.

Between nine-ten and nine-forty-five, I got fourteen calls,

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three of them from Leitov's increasingly-worried secretary. No one except her left a name or number.

By then I was getting scared. According to the secretary, Leitov had never missed a day of work without phoning (and she'd gone on to enumerate, as if reciting her beads, exact dates and reasons covering the past five years—there were only four such incidents). Maybe he was on the run. But from what? I conjured up some nightmares: he'd murdered his girlfriend; he'd embezzled his company's payroll . . .

And the greatest nightmare of all: I was going to be out of a job just as winter was getting a good hold on Europe. I wouldn't have believed it possible, but in eight short weeks I'd rediscovered the joys of hot baths and central heating and indoor plumbing. I'd remembered that I was an American born and bred to a reasonable standard of living. I'd learned that I was tired of rebelling against the material life; of living on the margin with the world's dropouts; of temporary, superficial relationships that had no beginnings or endings.

It was about that time that the doorbell rang.

The doorbell hadn't rung during the day in the whole time I'd been there. The house was so isolated, standing alone in the middle of fields on a little farm road, that the kinds of door-to-door salesmen or religious nuts you get in a town just never dropped by. In the evening, Leitov always went to the door himself if someone came. Of course, Danielle, and even old Mrs. Weiss, had keys.

The sudden noise was a shock. Like a bell calling the dead to church in a drowned village.

With so much apprehension at work, it was an anti-climax to find a dark, youthful, open-faced, smiling man looking down at me from his superior 5-11. Suit, tie, London Fog overcoat . . . I was almost disarmed. He looked so ordinary; like a fellow a girl could rely on; confide in. Oh yeah.

A split second later, my bum's-antennae went into play.

I was too late to slam the door. Somehow he'd managed to get leverage with his body. I backed into the hall and he came across the threshhold, still smiling up a storm.

"I'd like to see Mr. Leitov. If you'd just tell him I'm here . . .?" He held a calling card toward me.

I took my time reading it. William Thurgood, Marketing Consultant, and an address in London. Sure he was. And I was the Queen of Sheba. Cop. I knew a cop when I saw one, dressed or naked. I did a quick mental check on my story. I was, after all, working illegally here. If he picked up on that, the embassy would be queried and then my parents might get in on the act.

"He's at the office," I said, back-

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ing down the hall a little at a time. Past the bottom of the impressive stairs, the closed doors to the sitting and living rooms. . .

Thurgood (as his card named him) shut the front door behind himself and turned slightly to bolt it.

Ominous.

"I've just come from there," he answered in a gentle voice.

"Look, Mr. . . Mr. Thurgood. . ." I was still backing a few inches at each shuffle. "Mr. Leitov went to the office this morning. If he's not there. . ."

"As usual?"

I came to a full stop against a wall. The open doors to the kitchen on my left and dining room on my right beckoned, but I knew this guy would be quicker than anything I could manage, even though he'd stopped as well to give me the deception of maneuvering room.

"At the usual time?" he rephrased more sharply.

He had black, penetrating eyes. I made an automatic note that he was probably a Scorpio. Bad news. Not at all someone you would want for an enemy. His English sounded vaguely American, so I guessed he was Canadian. He lacked that odd stiffness that so many of the British have, but neither did he have the down-home body language of most Americans. Well, I supposed, he could be a New Englander, or someone with a lot of military training. . . "No," I admitted, deciding that I wasn't going to play games with a Scorpio cop if I could help it. "He left just after six."

"Just after?"

"Five after, to be exact."

He considered this, his eyes curiously blank for a moment. "And how did you know he was going to work?"

"He took his briefcase and he drove his car."

"Ah." Thurgood reached out abruptly and took my arm. "Well, then. Let's just have a look at his rooms."

I resisted for a second. "I can't let you. . ."

"You can't stop me."

And indeed I couldn't. He was not only a lot stronger than I was, he knew more about leverage than I'd picked up in all my wanderings. And he knew where Leitov's bedroom and study were, too. We went straight for them, me in front being shoved along as if he were using me for a shield.

There was nothing in Leitov's bedroom that seemed amiss. The bed was decently unmade; his clothes still hanging in the closets and filling the dressers; toilet articles neatly displayed in the bathroom. The study was a model of anonymity: not a book out of place or a stray paper on the desk. The Scorpio cop sighed and pushed me down in a chair in one corner of the study. "If you move a muscle," he told me in a quiet, matter-of-fact tone as he drew a small automatic from a shoulder

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holster, "I will shoot you. It's reflexes. I might regret it afterwards, but my reflexes are trained to work immediately, without conscious thought. Got that?"

"Yes." I did, too. I sat like a statue while he methodically turned the room over. I even sat when he went into the bedroom and did the same there. I might have made the door to the hall, but the bedroom had a door to the hall, too. He'd let me get that far and just step out in front of me. Bang. I really wasn't ready to die.

From the noises, Thurgood was getting more frustrated by the minute. I heard something rip and a second later I saw the edge of the mattress as he dumped it off the bedframe. Whatever he was looking for, he wasn't finding it.

"OK." He'd come into the study so suddenly, I jumped. But not far. He had his gun pointed at me.

"Let's try some questions and answers." He pulled a chair up in front of me and sat so his legs were on either side of mine.

"I don't have answers," I said stoutly, determined to evade any responsibility or involvement for as long as possible.

"We'll start easy. Like your name and what you're doing here."

He had a silky way of talking. As if he had all the time in the world when his body language was shrieking urgency and frustration. If he'd screamed at me, I would have been less afraid. I thought about lying, but he impressed me as the type who would dig around for my passport. "Kim Sharp," I said. "I'm . . . my family knew Mr. Leitov in Canada and when I found myself in a bad situation . . . I mean, I needed a place to stay for a while. I broke my wrist and the doctor said . . ."

He took hold of my wrist—fortunately my right one—with his free hand. "Oh?"

"The other one. *It's just healed!*" I yelled as he touched it with the muzzle of his gun.

"Tender, is it?"

I didn't like the way he said it. Or the way he seemed to have drawn closer to me, crowding me.

"Kim . . . Sharp, was it? You won't mind showing me your passport . . . ?"

See? The type to check everything out. "It's in my room . . . over the garage. My room's over the garage."

"A bit far away for the old man to wander at night. Or do you come up here?"

I stiffened. "I'm not . . . he doesn't . . ."

"Leitov's never been in Canada in his life . . . that I know of," he went on conversationally.

"Oh." I searched desperately for another story to tell. I couldn't admit I was actually working—being paid a salary—when I had no work permit. If you get thrown out of one European country for that, sooner or later you end up on all their shit lists. "I: . . . I come up here. I mean, when he wants me."

He grinned at me, an unpleasant quirk of the lips. He wasn't buy-

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ing lies of any sort; even those that agreed with his own theories.

When he hauled off and hit me, it was done so fast I didn't even see his hand coming. For a second, I was half in and half out of the chair, still trapped by his legs. He held me dangling by one arm so I wouldn't hit the floor. My cry of rage came before I realized how much that blow had hurt. The whole side of my face went from numb to raw pain and my neck felt like I'd had whiplash. I couldn't hear my own crying. There was too much noise in my ears.

But I heard his steady, measured voice as he rearranged me in the chair.

"Now, Miss, er, Sharp. What are you doing here?"

He waited for me to come out of my shock. He'd made his statement about how he meant to treat lies. Apparently he felt it wasn't necessary to belabor the point.

"You bastard! I'll have your badge!" I screamed the first thing that came to mind, fear and rage so mixed up with pain that I saw him through a red fog.

His smile was sympathetic this time. His eyes were not. "Ah, I see. You think I'm some sort of policeman. You think I'm supposed to operate under certain rules. . . certain constraints." He paused to give me time to take in the punch line. "Well, I'm not the police. And any constraints I might have are self-imposed." He raised his hand again and I shrank back from him. "You see, I don't have a lot of time. Mr. Leitov doesn't have a lot of time. So tell me what you're doing here."

"Not the police?" I asked stupidly. What then? Oh, God, he was as casually violent as a machine, totally unmoved by pain or tears.

"I'm afraid not."

Not the police. My words tumbled out, fear-driven, no longer chained by illusion. This wasn't my war. Leitov hadn't even asked for my silence. He'd just gone off and left me in the middle of no man's land. "I'm the housekeeper. No, look, it's God's truth. I keep things in order and cook two meals a day. That's all. I don't even know Mr. Leitov well. He's almost not here. . . I mean, he's gone all day and he's got a girlfriend who keeps him out most evenings. . ."

"Girlfriend?"

I'd startled him. In fact, he was so surprised, it showed for a second. In my right mind, I would have scored one for my side. But I was pretty far from my right mind by then. All that interested me was staying alive.

"Look, I just work for Mr. Leitov. But he's been decent to me and. . ."

"Then you should be trying to help him." Something in the air had changed; a faint rearrangement of the atmosphere.

"If I knew how, I would," I countered, responding to it like an abused child does to daddy's sudden smile.

He nodded, distracted by some

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inner thought. "I can see where you might think I was a threat to him," he agreed fairly. He pulled his chair back a little and gave me some symbolic room. "Leitov and I are colleagues. This morning he was to deliver something rather valuable to our. . . firm. He never showed. He never got to his office, either. Now, if he went on a sudden trip, where's the evidence of it? Even his toothbrush is still there. But he did take his briefcase, you said. And his car." He was making an effort to be pleasant. It showed. That was almost more frightening than his other mood. "So where is he? Let me stress that what he was bringing to me is of immense value to a lot of people who are much nastier than I am. . . "

"You mean they'll come here, too?" All I could think of was my own problems.

"If they haven't already got Leitov."

Now, finally, I understood what he was saying. Leitov could be dead, or worse. At least, that's what he wanted me to believe. It didn't matter. At that moment, self-interest lay in believing him; in telling him everything I could. But he'd hit me, and I owed him for that, didn't I?

Some of my confusion must have showed. A small quirking started at the sides of his mouth again.

"Look, I don't know anything. I really don't. You claim to be a colleague of Mr. Leitov. But you come roaring in here like the Gestapo, you beat up on me. . . If you know my boss so well, how come you don't know who I am? I've been here over eight weeks now." That's called a kitchen-sink argument, but I was so scared, that's how it came out.

Thurgood actually laughed. At least, I think it was a laugh. It didn't last long. He ran a finger gently down the bruising side of my face. "If I had 'beat up on you,' you wouldn't be in one piece, little girl."

His touch started me shaking.

"You weren't here three months ago," he went on calmly. "The housekeeper was an old friend of mine: Mrs. Frizzel. . . a little gray-haired lady from Scotland."

"But I don't know anything about her. I was in Champagne, see, picking grapes, and I broke my wrist and the guy I worked for down there put me in touch with Mr. Leitov by phone. Mr. Leitov said he'd lost his housekeeper. He sent me my fare to come up on the train. I've been here just over eight weeks, like I said. . . " I caught myself pleading, grovelling. I never knew I was such a coward. It wasn't as if I'd never been hit before. When you hang around the drifters—the *voyageurs*— you're bound to get hurt from time to time. But usually the ignition is temper or alcohol. What motivated this guy was something far colder.

Thurgood held up his hand as if declaring a truce. "OK. Let's say I

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accept your story. Stranger things have happened. . . "

"It's true, damn it!"

"OK. You don't know what happened to Mrs. Frizzel. But as recently as last week, I got a message from her saying everything was all right. The recognition codes were hers, no question. Last week," he added, suddenly savage. "Last week, from this house."

Recognition codes? I finally saw what I'd been sucked into. The details were still fuzzy, but the big picture was all there. Like they say in the pictures, I'd been set up. It didn't matter if it was drugs or espionage; the mechanics were the same. I was way out of my league. I wondered if Leitov had expected Thurgood to kill me out of hand. I rather thought he must have. After all, I could tell him about Danielle Bofours. Unless, of course, she was part of the whole illusion; a kind of back-up red herring to put Thurgood off the scent.

"Something's going on behind that funny face of yours. . . " said Thurgood as if he were doubtful there was enough intelligence for that. He was watching me, his dark eyes almost unblinking as he tried to read my thoughts.

What I had been fearing was the amoral brutality of a schizophrenic paranoiac was, instead, the coldly rational working of an incisive mind trying to cope with conflicting facts. It wasn't much comfort knowing that, but at least I thought I had some chance of survival now. He would listen to me, no matter how improbable my story sounded. His judgment might be absolute, but at least it would be carefully thought out.

"I've never seen your Mrs. Frizzel," I said cautiously. "Unless she's that ghastly cleaning woman who comes twice a week. Madame Weiss, she calls herself."

"No. I've met Madame Weiss. The problem I'm having is that if Mrs. Frizzel didn't send her message from here, then the message itself was a lie. And frankly, that poses a whole new set of problems. . . not to mention some rather sickening possibilities. . . " Casually, he put his gun back in its holster.

My heart missed a beat. Come on, booby, I raged at myself before I started getting too hopeful. He could kill you with his hands. It's quieter that way.

It was really disgusting how determined I was at that moment to give up.

"Tell me the name of the man in Champagne," Thurgood said, off on another tack. "The one who recommended this job."

"Laballe. Andre Laballe. He owns a small vineyard that sells to one of the big estates. He hasn't bottled his own champagne for ten or twelve years. Not since his father died, or so I was told. I mean, you've probably never heard of his place. I worked there last year. The pay is near the bottom of the scale, but the food's good and he doesn't try to take ad-

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vantage like some of them do. . . " I was glad to talk; glad to hear my own voice. It told me I was still alive.

Thurgood nodded. "And he told you Leitov had a job for you? What did he say exactly?"

So I explained again: what I'd been doing in Champagne, how I broke my wrist, living in that miserable shed, Laballe's suggestion and the phone call. Thurgood interrupted me twice. Once to tell me that Leitov was an Alsatian with a British passport, not a Jewish-Canadian with a Canadian passport. The other time was to ask if there had been any suggestion about how Leitov had "lost" his housekeeper.

"No, nothing. But he seemed so nice over the phone. . .I mean, polite and matter-of-fact. . ." I answered. "And I was in a bad scene. I was almost out of money. I was living in that shed. . ."

Thurgood held up his hand, clearly disinterested in my problems. "And when you arrived, who picked you up at the station?"

"Mr. Leitov. He came all the way into Brussels instead of making me take another train. On the way here, he explained how he wanted things done and about his precious schedule. It's about the only long conversation we ever had. Otherwise, he seemed easy about things. I mean, he never interfered in my choice of dinner menus, or argued about paying for whatever I wanted from the markets. He just didn't seem to care as long as his schedule was never disturbed."

"Did he try to make you?"

I lowered my eyes, embarrassed for some reason. "No. I had thought. . .No. He was very formal. Always. He barely spoke to me the whole time I was here. Well, there wasn't much opportunity. I ate in the kitchen and he ate in the dining room, and most of the rest of the time he was gone to the office or Danielle Bofours's place. . ."

"What did you do on your off-days?"

"Oh, I spent them here, usually. Mr. Leitov has a marvellous library, and I had my own TV and radio in my room. . .Well, it's really isolated, isn't it?" I added more truthfully. "It's a long walk anywhere. Besides, I was trying to save as much money as I could. A couple of times Mr. Leitov took me into Brussels and dropped me for the day so I could do some sightseeing."

"Where was he going?"

"I don't know. He didn't really encourage questions about his personal affairs. He didn't even want me to answer the phone or the door."

"But you got out to do the marketing. . .?"

"No. I don't drive. I gave him a list twice a week and Mrs. Weiss brought the stuff with her on her cleaning days. Maybe she did the actual shopping; I don't know. Like I said, Mr. Leitov really didn't encourage questions."

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"So you've been kept pretty much under wraps."

"You mean, no one would miss me." I shivered. It seemed so obvious in retrospect. "I guess even his office didn't know I was here. His secretary seemed really surprised when I answered the phone this morning."

"Why did you answer it? Didn't you say he'd told you not to?"

"Well, he missed his breakfast . . . went off without a word. He'd turned his own sacrosanct schedule upside-down. I thought maybe he was calling to explain . . ."

Thurgood got up and fooled around with the telephone on the desk for a moment. "I recall three of these . . ."

"One here, one in his bedroom, and one downstairs in the hall," I agreed. Somewhere in our conversation I'd stopped being so afraid.

"And in your room?"

I shook my head. "I told you, he didn't want me answering the phone. There wasn't one in the kitchen, either."

"Mmmm . . ." He was standing by the bedroom door now. "And the girlfriend?"

"Danielle Bofours. She must live between fifteen and thirty minutes away. I mean, he would leave here at seven-thirty to go to her place, and he had a thing about eating exactly at eight."

He snorted. "Describe her."

"Beautiful, curves, blonde. She wears her hair long and frizzy so it hangs around her face. About my height: five-three or four. But stacked. Maybe 36, 24, 38. Good legs; small feet. There are only two things that jar: her hands and her ears. Her hands are really short-fingered and pudgy. And her ears are large and ugly with long lobes. I guess that's why she wears her hair the way she does . . . to cover them." I tried to conjure her up in the room. "Brown eyes with little golden lights in them. She wears false eyelashes—black ones—and dark red lipstick. She paints her nails the same shade."

He smiled at me encouragingly. "You're doing very well. So we're probably looking for a dowdy woman with a dark wig, no make-up and largish shoes. In fact, I may know the lady . . ."

His logic went right past me, but his tone was distinctly friendly now. I'd passed the halfway mark toward survival.

"Now, why don't we go downstairs," he said, holding out his hand. "I want to check the phone there before I try to make any calls."

I stood up, and immediately pitched forward into darkness.

My face was wet and I couldn't see. For an awful moment, I thought I'd been dumped out in a field somewhere in the rain. Seconds later I was fully conscious. There was a wet cloth on my face. I was lying on Leitov's mattress wrapped in blankets.

A sound nagged. Thurgood's voice. I listened to it for a while,

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lulled. He must have been downstairs. I couldn't make out words; just a distant rise and fall in his precise tone. I liked his voice. I know that sounds dumb. He'd hit me, not to mention scaring me nearly to death. But whether you chalk it up to the natural attraction between Scorpios and Aquarians, or some kind of Freudian quirk, I liked his voice. And given a more normal introduction, I thought I could like him, too.

After a few minutes, I felt well enough to ease myself to the side of the bed and sit up. As an experiment, it was successful. Encouraged, I put my hands firmly on the headboard and stood up. Better and better. Only a little wobbly. Still, I stayed quiet for another few minutes, listening to the murmuring of Thurgood's . . .

No! There was a new voice. Several. And I knew one of them.

Leitov!

There'd been a gun in the study. I'd seen it when Thurgood went through the desk. To this day, I don't know why I went to get it before going downstairs. Instinct, I guess. Certainly I wasn't aware of making any intellectual decision. I didn't know much about guns—I mean, in a general way—although I could shoot well enough. I'd had a whole summer of learning to shoot when I was shacked up in Greece with a would-be terrorist, a young German who was waiting for someone to contact him about a training camp somewhere-or-other. That was when I'd first run away from my parents. I'd been ripe for the rough, tough life, and not too discriminating about who to share it with. Anyway, my terrorist had had a very nice Smith and Wesson revolver. He claimed to have taken it off an American MP. In those days, young and trying so hard to be cool, I'd laughed, determined not to believe he was telling the truth about any of it.

But he'd taught me well enough about that one kind of gun, and Leitov's was a close-enough cousin. I checked the chambers with almost professional elan. Of course it wasn't loaded. That was what my German had taught me: Never leave live ammunition in the chambers for any length of time. But there was a box of bullets in the back of the drawer. I loaded the gun and then released the safety and drew back the hammer. That last made it easier for my untrained fingers to pull the trigger quickly.

Thurgood had taken off my shoes. Lucky, that. My socks slid softly on the polished floorboards, silently over deep rugs. I had no clear idea of what I intended to do. I only knew I had to be very quiet in the doing.

". . . necessary," Leitov was saying. "The scenario's simple, really. You and Mrs. Frizzel will be dead and the house torn apart in an apparent search . . . blood of my type upstairs . . . We'll use the girl's. She has the same. That was a bit of luck, wouldn't you say? Skid marks of a shod body dragged

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down the stairs. There will even be witnesses: a picnicking couple passing on bicycles as we drive off. It will be supposed that I am the victim of a kidnapping. Who knows by whom? Terrorists? The opposition? These days it could be anyone. But the clever SIS will know Foster had just delivered the goods. I think they'll assume Ivan might have made a try to get them back."

"You think it's going to be that easy?" Thurgood challenged.

"Oh, duck soup, Bill. Duck soup." He laughed. I'd never heard him laugh before. "Only, you're the duck!" he went on, delighted with this bit of asinine wit.

My head was swimming. My bloodtype? How could he know what it was? The last time I'd had a blood test was in France. Of course, it had been in France that I'd been told about this job. And Mrs. Frizzel . . . the missing housekeeper. Leitov talked as if she were there with them now. In spite of my confusion, I'd heard one thing loud and clear. Leitov and friends were my personal enemies. They meant to kill me.

I started carefully down the stairs, praying that the relatively new wood wouldn't betray me.

"Don't kid yourself, Anton. You're done for." Thurgood again, as cold and steady as the deadly scorpion of his Sign. "What Foster delivered to you was a plant . . . a useless piece of bait. You've been under suspicion for months. We needed to settle the matter once and for all. It was all a set-up to see if you'd jump. Your net's rolled up, chum, no matter what you do to us."

"We waste time." That was Danielle Bofours. It would have been impossible to mistake that warm, musical lilt.

Not in the hall. I was rounding the last curve of the staircase and I could see from the front door, back, the whole length of it. Empty. All the doors in my sight were closed, too: the sitting room directly facing me and the kitchen and dining room doors at the back of the hall. That left only the living room.

From the loudness of the voices, I knew that its door must be open, and that posed problems. The stairs emerged into the hall just next to the front door. The living room door was immediately to the left of the stairs. Anyone coming down the stairs or in the front door would be seen clearly from several positions in the living room.

I had my own survival to think of. I didn't owe him anything. He'd hit me. I had to save myself. I stood paralyzed on the stairs, arguing with myself. What I was contemplating was suicidal.

But any moment, Thurgood and Mrs. Frizzel were going to be murdered. I don't think that I factored in inferences from Leitov's talk that they were on the "right side." I was in no state to think beyond the personal.

After a few seconds, I came on

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down, flat against the wall to prolong the surprise.

"Let her go." Thurgood meant Mrs. Frizzel, I supposed.

"Don't be stupid," Danielle Bofours trilled, clearly amused. "After going to all this trouble to keep her alive and unmarked? And don't think that was a trivial problem, considering we had to persuade her to give over her recognition codes. . . "

There was a sound as if Thurgood had tried to hit someone.

"OK, Bill. That's enough," Leitov said. "Pull her up. Danielle's right. We're wasting time." He sounded excited, as if he was slavering. "No.? Well, I'll just have to kill her where she lies. . . "

That was my cue. There wouldn't be time for another. I slammed into the room running, shooting ahead of me like a berzerker, shouting, "Down! Down!" as if Thurgood were the only one who would understand me.

Screams, shouts, the close-quarter explosions of guns. Something hit me, a ton of bricks concentrated on my side. I kept moving, falling really, unable to see, hearing only, as a furious battle raged over around me. An army. Tripping and bucketing against me, against the furniture. Bodies and blood and a sudden loss of sight.

And some woman laughing.

Maniacal laughter.

My laughter, as I slipped into hell.

"Doctor!"

Soft sounds of crepe soles across a polished floor.

Soft sounds of an almost noiseless door opening and, after a while, closing again to the rhythm of returning crepe soles.

Two figures hovering.

"Well, yes, good," murmured a British accent; male. "Just notify them, will you?"

One figure gone. The other still hovering.

Suddenly I could see his face. Homely, non-committal, nice. My lips formed a shaky curve.

"Ah," said the man with genuine satisfaction. And then, "Don't trouble yourself trying to talk, Miss Sharp. Just listen. You're in England and quite safe in hospital. I do assure you, you're among friends."

My lips curved further at that.

The next time I was aware, Thurgood was there, his dark Scorpio eyes fixed on my unfocussed blue ones. "Hi," he said, grinning. "I won't ask how you feel. Not much, I should think, with all that junk they're pumping into you."

I must have twitched, because he put his hands on my shoulders briefly, as if to keep me still. He wasn't going to let me try to talk, either.

"To answer all your questions, one of your bullets got lucky and hit Leitov in the back. With all the confusion and everyone trying to

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get behind the furniture, I got hold of his gun. About that time, reinforcements arrived and, in the general mayhem, our side won."

"Friz . . . Friz . . ." I couldn't finish it (maybe they were right to keep me from talking). It had stuck in my mind . . . the mystery of the disappearing-reappearing housekeeper.

Thurgood bent forward as if it helped him to understand my mumbling. Then he grinned more broadly. "Oh, yes, I see. Mrs. Frizzel. You must tell us how much you overheard when you feel up to it. Well, our Frizzel is in pretty fair shape, considering. They'd been keeping her on ice for the occasion, you know. Their original goal had been to simply intercept the packet they thought was coming through from East Germany. Of course, they hoped to keep Leitov in place. They probably meant to fake a robbery. You know: hit the old man on the head and run off with the goods. But Leitov discovered Mrs. Frizzel was watching him. That meant that he was under suspicion. So they now had two goals: to lift the packet as soon as it was delivered to Leitov, and then to pull Leitov out altogether. They had to allay London's suspicions until this could be accomplished. For a variety of reasons, Mrs. Frizzel became too much of a threat, so they picked her up, winkled her procedures and recognition codes out of her. . ."

I closed my eyes a second. "Winkled" them out of her. It was British understatement at its most unbearable.

". . . and went on sending her weekly reports as if all was well. We, of course, were keeping well away so Leitov wouldn't smell a rat. Got all that so far?

"Well, then. They brought you in as a red herring, let you get a good look at Olga . . . your Miss Bofours . . . in case they needed a little more confusion, and then waited for the packet to come. As an added bonus, they decided to take me out in the process. When Leitov didn't show for his meeting with me, I was bound to check his house. They reasoned that I'd be fooled into concentrating on you just long enough for them to move back into the house and nab me. And it all worked like clockwork. Only they reasoned without my native caution. I had back-up staked out in unobtrusive places along the road.

"But most of all, they reasoned without you. I want to thank you on behalf of Mrs. Frizzel and myself. Her Majesty's Government wants to thank you . . ."

His grin slipped and then went altogether. "Kim Sharp, if I'm lucky enough to live to a hundred, I shall never forget that charge of yours. The Light Brigade couldn't have been more insane." Something like a sob stopped him for a moment. When he got control again, his dark eyes were brighter for tears. "Whatever possessed you?" he asked rhetorically. "You

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have a large hole in your side, did you know that? Idiot, idiot, idiot . . ."

I lay there, unable to answer. You, I wanted to say. You possessed me, damn you. Chemistry. The madness of chemistry. I couldn't let you die, even if you did hit me. Damn you . . . damn you . . .

I must of said it somehow.

At least he seemed to understand, because he bent over and kissed me, a gossamer touch, a butterfly's wing against my dry lips.

"You'll be OK, Kim Sharp. I'll see to that, do you understand?"

Yes. I understood. I might never know all the ins and outs of this adventure, but I knew without any doubt that this man was my anchor.

The time for running away was over.

I'd found home.

NEXT ISSUE

INTERVIEW WITH **BRUCE BOXLEITNER**—Stan Wiater takes the "Scarecrow" out of *Scarecrow & Mrs. King!*

HOLY WAR—a tale of *today's headlines* by Frank Laffitte.

THE F.B.I.—a brief history of the agency that dealt with espionage in the U.S. before, during, and after WWII.

Suspense from Michael W. Masters: ". . . that arms shipment *has* to get through the rebels. If it doesn't, the rebels may go under—along with the president's entire central Africa policy."

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Spying Through Time

by Joe Lewis

Before getting into our story, perhaps a note of explanation is due. This issue's subject is Joseph Fouché, who is yet another figure from the French Revolution. I'm not sure how many columns I've produced, but even casual readers will have noticed that the bulk of them have dealt with either the French or American Revolutions. Why the emphasis on this time period and these two countries? It's very simple, really; I enjoy this time period more than any other in history.

The two revolutions are closely tied to one another and mark, I feel, the beginning of modern history. Romantic, exciting, intriguing—the period from 1765 to 1815 strikes me as the most fascinating fifty years in Western history. Maybe you feel differently; perhaps you'd prefer to hear about other periods in history. If so, I'd love to hear from you, and would be happy to look into areas of specific reader interest for this column.

For now, however, let's get on with the story of a man who mastered counter-espionage and, on a darker note, terrorism: Joseph Fouché.

Born in Brittany, Joseph Fouché devoted himself to the study and teaching of the Catholic order of the Oratorians until the

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Revolution began in 1789. He became heavily involved in politics in his home district, thereafter, rapidly becoming a radical Jacobin. In 1792, he was sent to represent his district at the National Convention, which was to be transformed shortly into the ruling body of France. As perhaps his first official act of brutality (justified, or otherwise, in this particular case), Fouché joined the majority in voting the execution of Louis XVI and his wife, Marie Antoinette.

Fouché became a key implementer of Maximilion de Robespierre's Campaign of Terror (capitalized as an historical event in this case; all other acts of terrorism get their descriptive name from this event). He was directly, and apparently enthusiastically, responsible for hundreds if not thousands of executions. Chief among his victims were various royalists and clerics, two groups nearly indistinguishable in the eyes of Robespierre, and therefore his own.

After a time, though, Fouché grew suspicious of Robespierre's intentions. The de facto dictator of France, agreeing with Rousseau that religious belief served state interests, tried to implement a cult of the "Supreme Being" in place of the Catholic Church. Although his plan was likely to go nowhere, the attempt at implementation was just as likely to result in the execution of several anti-clerical elements, including the zealous Fouché. So Fouché joined the plot to overthrow Robespierre, in 1794, and in the end increased his own political weight.

Fouché was in with Napoleon from the onset, and was appointed Minister of Police for two different terms. That Napoleon recognized and appreciated Fouché's ruthless efficiency in dealing with spies and enemies of the First Consul was apparent when he explained his early policy of allowing emigrés and exiles to return to France: "Where is the revolutionary who would not have faith in the order of things when Fouché is Minister [of Police]?"

Fouché made clever use of threats, double agents, and misinformation to maintain a tight control over intelligence activities. His spies were required to be loyal, and not a few were executed when their loyalty failed to measure up. His operation in 1806—wherein he let it be "known" that there were several highly placed French officials disgusted with Napoleon's reign, who would soon be acting to restore Louis XVIII to the throne—was successful enough to net several leading counter-revolutionaries, and even drew a note of interest from the government of England. Fouché was rewarded for this operation with the title Duc d'Otrante in 1809.

Fouché's long experience in French politics by this time (twenty

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years during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras was extraordinary. Fouché was either a charmed man or an extremely astute politician.) led him to believe that Napoleon's period of dominance was nearly through. He made overtures to the exiled Louis XVIII, and tried to gain a position in his government in 1814, when Napoleon was first exiled. Failing to convince the new government to forgive his vote for Louis XVI's execution, as well as his long resume of royalist annihilation, Fouché joined Napoleon anew for the latter's *One Hundred Days.* When it became apparent that Napoleon was failing once more, Fouché made a great contribution to his final ousting and the office of Minister of Police was returned to him in Louis XVIII's new government. Again, his past proved to be too much baggage, however, and he was dismissed from official duties once and for all a short time later. Joseph Fouché, spymaster and terrorist, died in 1820.

Did you know...

All spies do not have the aura of glamour or notoriety. Some do their job and die alone . . . in a horrible way.

The second World War had long been over when a Scottish fishing boat, off-course in the inhospitable North Atlantic near a tiny isle in the Outer Hebrides, saw a scrap of dirty cloth fluttering in the wind.

The scrap of cloth was a rotting gunny sack lashed to a piece of driftwood wedged in the rocks. Beneath it was a tiny cliff, and sitting in the entrance was the fully clothed, mummified body of a U-Boat officer—according to his cap. Around him lay empty provision tins and water bags, a pair of binoculars, and a broken radio transmitter, apparently smashed in a fall.

Fergus Cash, one of the boat-crew who had served in the Merchant Navy during the war, put the story together: "I think he had been put ashore by a U-Boat to spy on the Allied Convoys rounding the North of Scotland en route to Murmansk, with vital supplies for the Russians," he said, "but somehow he broke his transmitter. One of two things then happened. Getting no signals from him, the U-Boat assumed he had been caught and wrote him off, or, more likely, the U-Boat was sunk without survivors in the Atlantic and he was tragically left to die alone without food and water.

"No fishermen were allowed in the area, in those days, to see his pitiful signal and, although surrounded by water, he could not drink it. When we found him, his empty eye sockets were staring out to sea, looking for a ship, friend or foe, that never came; his mouth was open in the rictus of death and his shrivelled hands were clutching the parched throat which had inexorably choked him. There was no identification on him.

"It was a lonely and ghastly way for anyone to die . . ."

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THE EXPERTS AGREE THAT CENSORSHIP WORKS

The experts have always agreed that censorship is the single best way to promote agreement on an idea. Even on a bad idea. Censorship worked in Nazi Germany, and censorship works today in Iran, Cuba and the Soviet Union.

Today, a few so-called "decency" groups are trying to make censorship work in America. These people feel that if you aren't allowed to watch "dangerous" television programs like "Mash" and "The Day After," or read "immoral" magazines like *Ms.* and *Penthouse* or books like *Ulysses* and *Huckleberry Finn*, our nation will be a better place.

Fortunately, in America you don't have to trust your freedom to "experts." You have the freedom to say No to censorship. Say it today—tomorrow may be too late.

Freedom is everybody's business.

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ON FILE.....

She Sang For Secrets

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She was France's answer to Marlene Dietrich; a Gallic "Lili Marlene." Yet Josephine Baker was something more than a singer who reminded lonesome soldiers of home. She went to war, too; right into the front line as one of France's ace secret agents, with nothing to protect her but a fabulous reputation.

The enemy loved her, also, for she had been as well known in pre-war Berlin as in Paris, the city she took by storm at the age of twenty—dancing *The Charleston* at the Folies Bergere, wearing only a girdle of bananas. Soon the Creole beauty, who was born in abject poverty in St. Louis, was strolling down the Champs Elysees with a pet leopard on a jewel-encrusted collar and chain, the uncrowned Queen of Paris.

As for Berlin, where she entertained frequently in the Thirties, with theatrical agent Max Reinhart, women guests at her parties seemed to take on new life after meeting the effervescent Josie, according to diplomat and patron of the arts, Count Harry Kessler. But although she loved the ordinary German people, she hated the Nazis, knowing that as a Creole, a woman of racially mixed blood, only her internationally acclaimed talent kept her from the gas chamber.

That is why she volunteered for the Secret Service the day war broke out. Her own agent, Daniel Marouani, spoke to his friend, Jacques Abtey, in Military Intelligence. Josie was in a perfect position to help and wanted to know where to start.

She began in Paris, staying on when the city fell, to sing and dance for the enemy. Old contacts from Berlin were among them, some, by then, generals and important members of the Party.

At cocktail parties and theatre suppers, Josie sang, smiled and listened. Soon she heard that French soldiers escaping into Spain were being ambushed, tortured and shot. Being interested in Spanish music, performed often in her act, she volunteered to sing for Franco's troops, as well, and was allowed across the border into Spain.

It was over candlelit dinners with officers of the Military Police that she found out who among the partisans was betraying French soldiers crossing the border. A week later, the traitor stumbled under the wheels of a truck on a crowded Barcelona street. Josie was singing in town at the time. . .

When the Allies desperately wanted information for a landing in North Africa, London ordered Josie in, ostensibly on a singing tour for German, Italian and Vichy troops.

During the day, she strolled idly round troop installations, noting facts with her photographic memory, bypassing the guards with charming smiles and a promise to sing personally for them that

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night. Every night, she closed her act with the famous conga "La Blicoti," personally heading the snake of dancers through the night club.

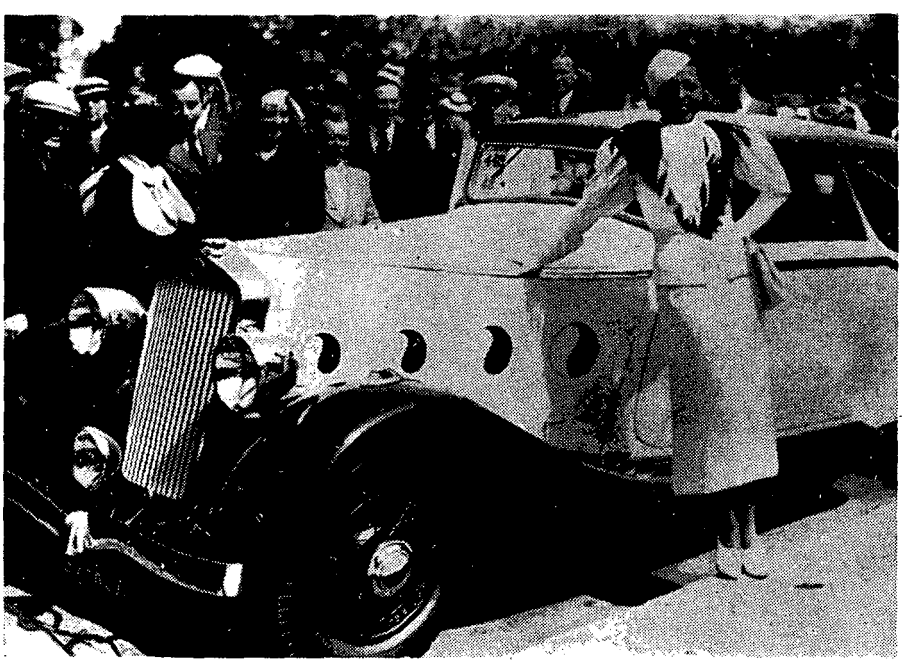
Sitting by the powder room door was her contact, a pretty Arab girl. If she had information to pass on, Josie had it scribbled in code on a slip of rice paper screwed into a ball. As she swayed past the Arab girl's table, heading the conga, she dropped the tiny ball into a martini waiting on the table.

They were never detected. If they had been, the Arab girl would simply have swallowed the evidence.

Josie's cover was perfect: a friend of high Party officials, risking her own life to sing for the Axis troops. But she faced grave risk of another kind in her double life.

Morning could find her deep in the Arab desert, where beautiful women were worth their weight in gold, as slaves, talking from a veiled burnoose to sheikhs of the Berber and Senussi, asking for their help when the invasion came and paying any bribes necessary from her own pocket.

Yet, at night, away from the verminous goatskin tents, she would be back in the city, elegantly gowned, sipping chilled champagne



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with top Axis generals, always listening and reporting back to Free French HQ in London.

But the German Abwehr were no fools. Before long, they began to suspect her. Information was always leaking from places she visited and the Abwehr did not believe in coincidence. They were hesitant to arrest her, however, because of her popularity with the civilian populace and also with the elite Afrika Korps, who, like their leader Rommel, had no love for the Nazis running their country. So they poisoned her food, instead, and in 1942, she lay at death's door in Casablanca Hospital.

She was still there in November, when half a million Allied troops poured ashore, and as George Patton swept through with his armored column, he sent her flowers with the message: "Valiant girl! Get well soon. We still need you!"

Josie wiped away a tear and called for her clothes. Barely able to stand, she sang that night at a celebration concert, with Generals Patton, Mark Clark and Alexander in the front row.

There was still espionage work for her to do, in Syria and the Lebanon, where Nazi agents were formenting unrest between Arab and Jew, and then she followed the victorious Allies back to Europe, singing to weary troops until the echoes of battle died away.

As he placed the Cross of Lorraine round her neck, making her a national heroine, General Charles de Gaulle told her she had been "*magnifique*" during France's darkest hour.

When she died at the age of 68, in 1975, all France mourned their Josie. She had found—and lost—several fortunes and had fought a lonely, dangerous and personal war for the country which adopted her, and her homeland, too.

She told the author, who knew her in France in the Fifties: "The French gave me their hearts. The least I could do was give them mine, to die if necessary as an undercover agent. There was never a doubt where my duty lay."

SPY TALK: *Bigot List* - a closely held list of cleared personnel, who have access to the roster of foreign nationals under contract to a U.S. intelligence agency.

SPY TALK: *Legend* - a fictional operational plan for cover; sometimes to cover itself; false biography or trail.

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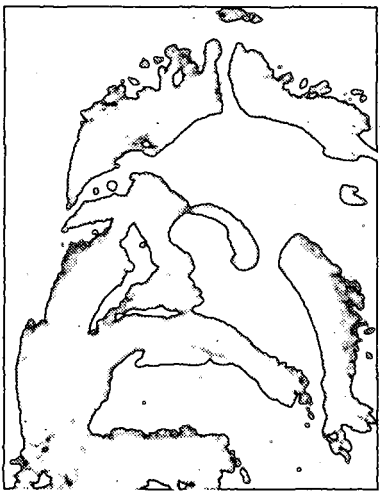

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SPY STORY

Each of the following sentences has two dashes. A hint is given (in parentheses) before each sentence, in the form of a synonym, to fill in the first dash. The second dash must be filled in by the reverse-spelling of the first word you found—and it must all make sense!

(prevail) Once upon a time there was a spy who could not _____ if he had to kill, no matter how _____ his adversary was.

(move) His first _____ was to try for a desk job; his boss told him "we have no _____ here."

(touch) With a _____ at his eyes, because he felt so _____, he accepted his fate.

(scene) Put on the _____, he accepted his new assignment, as well: since he was _____, he was to assassinate the entire GRU inter-departmental baseball team after their big game began.

(measure) He flew to Moscow, took _____ to _____ a quiet sigh, sneaked into the locker-room, and there he sewed all the team members' uniforms together.

(amounted to) He _____ caught but found innocent of espionage when they _____ that a stitch in time saved nine.

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ESPIONAGE SEARCHWORD

E A L S E T A O C N R U T C
L D C W O A O I F I E L N X
O A O L M I C R O W A V E Z
M S P U L L I O T I W L T D
A M T R B O N P T U A A A G
R S O I E L T N A B R G R U
G M E N I V E P A R G E V B
O O I G I D R C U E T N E R
T L R L I T R T R A I T O R
P O I F I E O A S O R T E E
Y L N O D T G R T A S V A H
R O P O R D A M Y A O S B P
C T C H I N T R S C P N O I
Y T I R U C E S Y K C E H C

Agent
Betray
Bug
Cabal
Check
CIA
Cipher
Code
Confidential
Cover
Cryptogram
Dagger
Double-cross
Drop
Enroll
Grapevine
Interrogate
Microwave
Military
Mole
Monitor
Net
Plot
Ring
Scam
Security
Tail
Tape
Torture
Trap
Traitor
Turncoat

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SPY SCRAMBLE

Unscramble the six words below and then use the double underlined letters to solve the "final scramble," a famous espionage personality.

CLAMBERS — — — ═ — — — —

DONCEE — — — — ═ —

SACHE — ═ — — —

RAWCLOD — — ═ — — ═ —

MERIC — — — ═ —

TRAYMILI — — ═ — — ═ — —

— — — — — — — —

SOLUTION TO: SPY STORY

(prevail) Once upon a time there was a spy who could not live if he had to kill, no matter how evil his adversary was.

(move) His first step was to try for a desk job; his boss told him "we have no pets here."

(touch) With a dab at his eyes, because he felt so bad, he accepted his fate.

(scene) Put on the spot, he accepted his new assignment, as well: since he was tops, he was to assassinate the entire GRU inter-departmental baseball team after their big game began.

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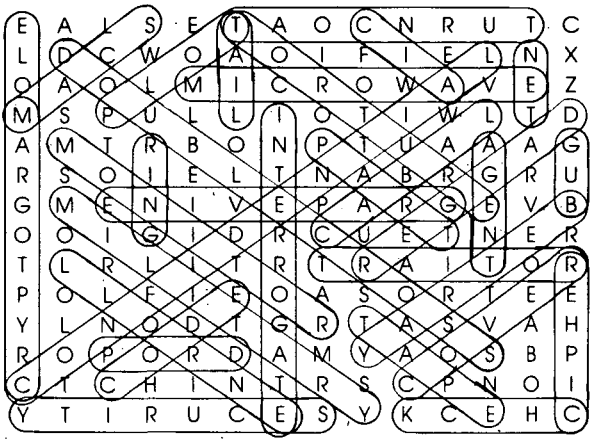
(measure) He flew to Moscow, took time to emit a quiet sigh, sneaked into the locker-room, and there he sewed all the team members' uniforms together.

(amounted to) He was caught but found innocent of espionage when they saw that a stitch in time saved nine.

SOLUTION TO: ESPIONAGE SEARCHWORD



SOLUTION TO: SPY SCRAMBLE

ADAM HALL

SCRAMBLE	MILITARY
ENCODE	CRIME
CHASE	COLD WAR

EDITOR'S NOTE: It has been brought to our attention that we inadvertently omitted a clue in the Crossword Puzzle, pages 156/157, in the June 1986 issue. The clue for No. 17 DOWN is: Sea-going vessel.

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(c) Total amount for 3 ads $ _____
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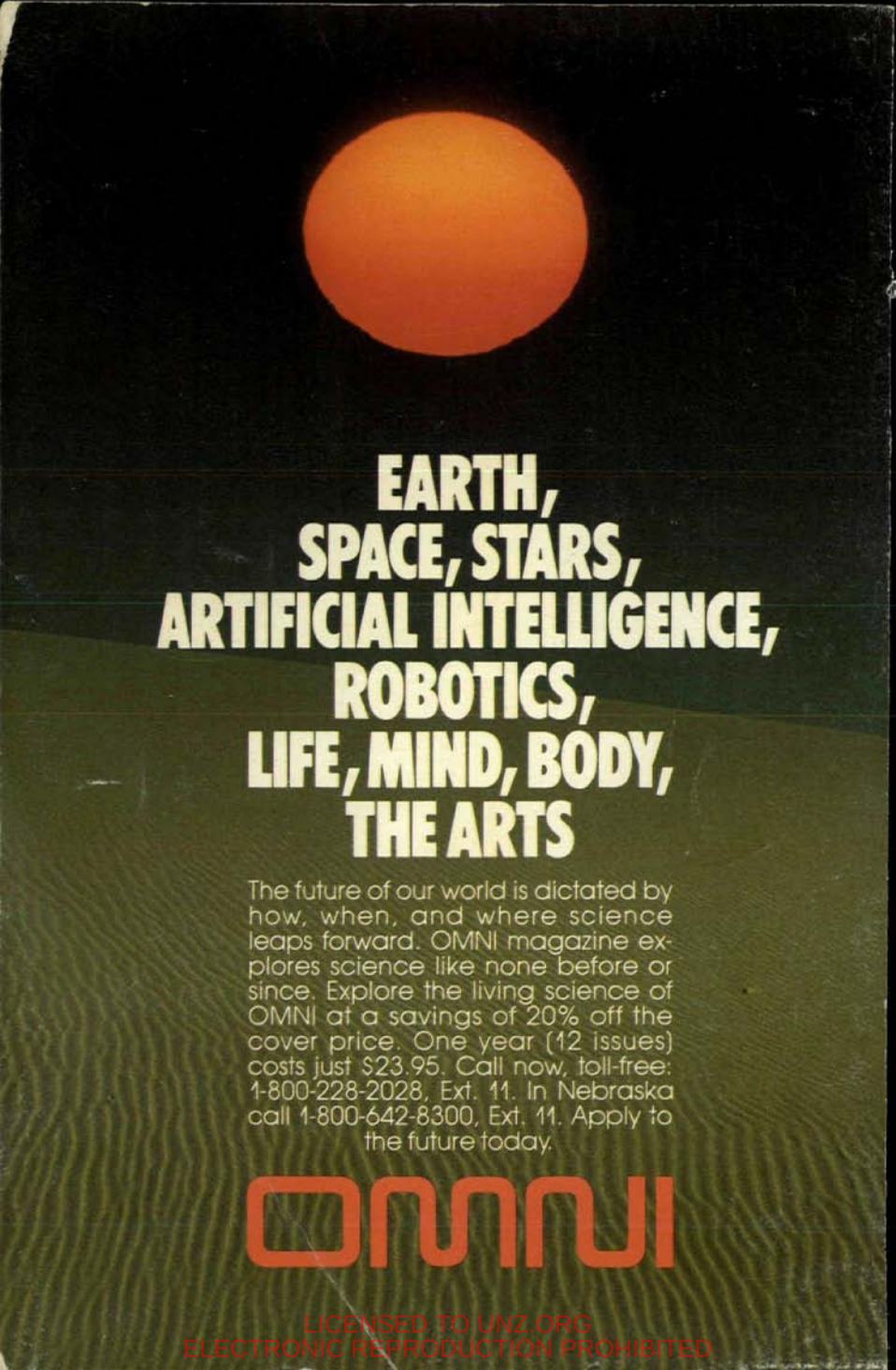
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